THE GREAT BIBLE RENOWNS

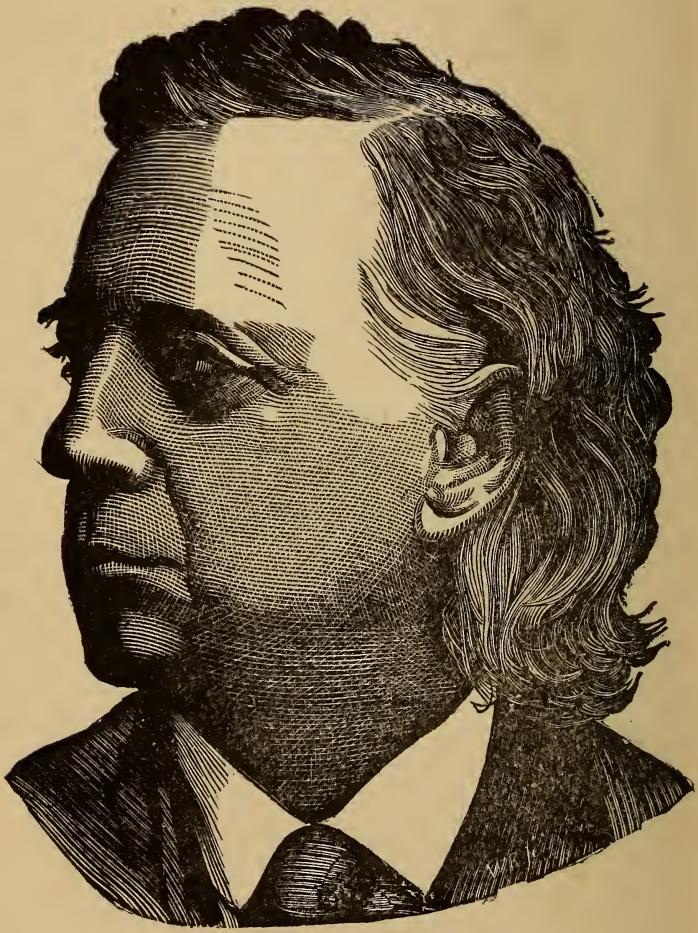
By HENRY WARD BEECHER
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THE GREAT BIBLE RENOWNS.



HENRY WARD BEECHER

THE GREAT BIBLE RENOWNS

A SEQUEL TO THAT GREAT BOOK—"BIBLE CHARACTERS."

DESCRIBED AND ANALYZED IN THE SERMONS AND WRITINGS OF THE

FOLLOWING FAMOUS AUTHORS:

Henry Ward Beecher.
Thomas Guthrie.
Charles H. Spurgeon.

SUPPLEMENTED BY THE GREATEST POEMS IN PRINT



CHICAGO:
THOS. W. JACKSON PUBLISHING COMPANY.
(Successors to Rhodes & McClure Publishing Company.)

BS571
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MAR -6 1915

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INTRODUCTION.

BY THE REV. C. B. GILLETTE, PH. D.

The editor of this volume has sought the scholars who have been recognized by the world as the leading religious teachers of their age, and culled from their utterances choice selections, respecting Jesus and the "Holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Henry Ward Beecher, the poet preacher, the philosopher, the theologian. As one said of him, "He was a poet without meter, a philosopher without classification, and a theologian without system, and yet he was a poet, a philosopher, and a theologian."

Dr. Guthrie, who, with his earnest Scotch soul, scarcely paralleled even in Scotland itself, has contributed such rich jewels, not in the rough, but polished and finished.

And of Spurgeon, what shall we say? What need we say? He is one whom the world knew but to admire, cherish and love. He was truly a preacher of Christ. I think one would be warranted in saying that none since the Apostle John has so promulgated and defended the Christ of the fourth Gospel, the divinity not only, but the Deity of Christ, as the Rev. Charles Spurgeon.

CONTENTS.

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

Christ 7
Nicodemus 27
Paul 30
The Rich Fool 96
The Prodigal Son 98
Yield Not to Temptation 121

THOMAS GUTHRIE.

Jesus 122-169
Adam 136-206
Gideon 138
St. John 141
Man With the Withered Hand 143
Moses 145-208-221
Abraham 149
Joram 150
Jehu 152
Thief on the Cross 153
St. Paul 154-165-217
St. Peter 159
Samson 161-215
Nehemiah 161
Job 163-211
Jacob 204
Joshua 206
God 209
Absalom 215
Queen Esther 216
Woman 223
Lead Kindly Light 225

CHARLES H. SPURGEON.

Abraham 226
Adam 231
Balaam 233
Christ 237
Elisha 262
God 267
Hagar and Ishmael 272
Jesus 275
Job 353
Judas 359
Paul 361
Philip 381
Pilate 384
Pilate's Wife 390
Sarah 394
Saul 396
The Prodigal Son 398
Zacchaeus 419
America 423

THE GREAT BIBLE RENOWNS

DISCUSSED BY THE TALENTED ORATOR AND PULPITEER

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

CHRIST.

We read in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews:

"Wherefore, in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted."

From the time that theology received from the Greek mind a philosophic and systematic form, there has been, as compared with the sacred Scriptures, a total change of the point of view in which Christ is presented—if not universally, yet to a great extent. The whole force of controversy has been to fix the place, the title and the nature of Christ.

This is a dynastic idea. I do not say that it ought not to be sought out in any degree; but I do say that it is not in accordance with the structure and comprehen-

sive aim of the New Testament, and it is not using the facts or revelations of the New Testament as they were originally used, and as they were intended to be used. It is something outside the purposes of those facts or revelations.

The genius of the New Testament is to present, in Jesus, the most attractive and winning view of God, to inspire men with a deep sense of the divine sympathy and helpfulness, and to draw men to Christ as the One who can meet all their wants while living, when dying and in the great life beyond.

Over these three great circuits which the imagination makes—Life, Death and Eternity—Christ is represented as having dominion; and He is presented to men in such aspects as tend, according to the laws of the human soul, to draw them toward Him in confidence, in love, and in an obedience which works by love.

Therefore, it is as Teacher, Guide, Brother and Savior—it is as Shepherd, Physician and Deliverer—it is as a Mediator, a Forerunner and a Solicitor in court—that Christ is familiarly represented. He is sometimes, also—though seldom as compared with other representations—represented as a Judge or a Vindicator.

The force of the representations of the Gospels, and of the laws which have sprung from the Gospels, is to present Christ as so seeking the highest ends of human life and so aiming at the noblest developments of character in men that every man who feels degraded, bound or overcome by evil shall also feel: "Here is my Succor; here is my Remedy for that which is wrong; here is my Guide toward that which is right; here is my Help

in those great emergencies for which human strength is vain. Living or dying, we are the Lord's." This is the spirit that was meant to be inculcated.

Christ came, He said himself, not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might have life.

"The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

If, then, we take our stand at the point of view through which the Scriptures were developed, we shall remove, I think, many of the difficulties which embarrass the minds of men, and which prevent their making a personal and saving use of Jesus Christ as He is presented in the Scriptures.

The identification of the Lord Jesus Christ with the human race has been a fertile theme of comment, of criticism and of skepticism. Many have objected to it as unworthy of any true conception of the divine nature.

Now, it was not the purpose of the New Testament to undertake to show us the whole nature of God, and to give us the elements by which we could abstractly judge as to what was fitting and what was not fitting.

We are limited in our judgment of the divine nature by the elements of our own being ; for that which is not in some sense represented in us we can have no conception of. The immutable principles of truth, of honor, of justice, of love and of mercy, in human nature, furnish us the materials by which we are enabled to judge of the divine nature.

Is it not, then, worthy of our conception of God that He should seek to win the race to confidence in Him?

Is there a better way for Him to do it than by identifying Himself with the race?

When Christ wished to do His kindest works He did not stand afar off, saying: "Be this done, and be that done." He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town and healed him. He drew near to those whom He wished to bless, and touched them. He laid His hands on them. And that which fell out in the individual instances of Christ's life was the thing which was done in regard to the whole scheme of Christ's appearing. If God spoke to men not from afar off by the word of mouth, or intermediately through great natural laws; if He sent His Son into the world to bring men, in their conditions, and according to their language, according to their modes of understanding, to a true notion of what the divine disposition and purpose were, was not that the best way in which to win their confidence?

If this is so, then there can not be a method devised by which the human race can be more surely won to confidence than by the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

If you look, in the light of an abstract divine propriety, at the whole history which is given in the Gospels of the incarnation of Christ, you will reach one sort of result; but if you look at it from the side of the human mind and of human want, which is the side that is presented in the New Testament, another and an entirely different view will be arrived at.

We are not put into possession of those materials by which God, standing in the midst of His moral government, universal and all-glorious, can be inspected by us, except in one particular—namely, in regard to what will

do good to a race that is so low as this is and has been. Looked at from that point of view, would it not be divine beneficence, would it not stimulate human emotion, would it not tend to draw men toward God, if He should conduct His mission and ministry on Earth so that men would feel that they could interpret His nature by the experience of their own? Would not that have the effect to win men back to Him?

Let me illustrate in another way.

What is that which is most becoming in woman—what, but that she should dwell with her kindred? What, but that she should separate herself from that which is rude and coarse? What, but that all those sweeter virtues which refinement breeds should blossom from her perpetually?

We think of her as the child in the cradle—as the daughter at home—as the maiden sought or won—as the young bride—and as the matron. All these elements enter into our conception of the dignity and beauty of woman.

Questioned as to her sphere and her functions, every one instinctively would say that her sphere and her functions were those of moral elevation, of refinement and of intellectual culture. Every one would say that she was born to make home bright and beautiful.

And yet, when that great concussion came which seemed likely to rend the continent from East to West; when a million men in the North were tramping southward and a million men in the South were tramping northward, and all was rude warfare; when men were gathered from every side of humanity, good and bad,

mingled and fighting together under the flag—where on Earth could you have found more dirt, more blood, more confusion or more rudeness than in the hospitals outlying the edges of the battle fields?

And yet, woman walked there—an angel of light and mercy. Many and many a poor soldier, the child of Christian parents, dying, was led by woman's ministration, under those adverse circumstances, from the very borders of hell to the very heights of faith and hope and belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There, in the place most unlikely, in the last place you would have spoken of as the true sphere of woman—there woman reaped a glory that shall never die so long as there are annals of this land. And so long as there are annals of our dear old Fatherland, Florence Nightingale's name will be remembered.

There will never be any who will forget that it was in circumstances of humiliation, rudeness and confusion—circumstances where there was every thing which was most repellent to taste and refinement—that she stood to relieve suffering.

Now, when you think of the Lord Jesus Christ, if, with the Greeks, you project some great crystal scheme of government, and conceive of Him as administering it; if you form, in the stithy of your imagination, an ideal of a perfect God, ruling over men, and bring that ideal into this world—do you not leave God at an inaccessible height above the heart of man?

But, I ask, in case the object of this revelation is to win men, would it not be the best thing that you could do to say: "He was born of woman; He grew from

childhood to manhood, and at thirty years of age He became a teacher"?

If the design is to inspire the human race with confidence and sympathy toward their Maker and their Judge, will not this be the very thing above all others that will do it?

Bring the divine nature from the vast cloudy sphere beyond into this world, transmute it into the conditions in which we live and which limit our understanding, and conceive of Jehovah as Immanuel—"God with us"—and you do that which is better calculated than any thing else to present the conception of God so that men's hearts shall take hold of Him. For that which we need, after all, is a tendril which shall unite us to God.

Our God must not be to us as a storm nor as fire, if we are to cling to Him. The storm and the fire may make men afraid of evil, but they never will call forth men's love.

You might, by the north wind, throw the convolvulus, the morning glory, the queen of flowers, prostrate along the ground; but it is only when the warm Sun gives it leave that it twines upward about that which is to support it, and blesses it a thousand fold by its efflorescence all day long.

The terrors of the Lord may dissuade men from evil, but it is the warm shining of the heart of God that will bring men toward His goodness and toward Him.

This view of Christ meets both theories of men's origin.

If men are descended from a higher plane by the fall of their ancestors, this view of God seeking their recu-

peration is eminently fitting; or, if men are a race that is emerging from a lower plane and seeking a spiritual condition, it is equally fitting.

In either case, what they want is a succoring God; and such was Jesus Christ as presented to the world in His incarnation.

Added force is given to the simple narrative of the life of Jesus if we look at it from the point of view which we have been considering—namely, such a teaching as shall lead men to confidence in God and communion with Him.

If you ask what is becoming in a dramatic God, or in an ideal Sovereign, you will get one result, and it will be a human result. If you ask what would be likely to inspire the human family with a profound sense of God's sympathy with mankind, and of His helpfulness toward them, would not that be the very result of the presentation of Christ's life? Look at it as the life of One who came to win men, and does it not touch the universal chords of sympathy?

He was born of a woman; and that cloudy wonder, the mystery of the mother-heart (which no poet ever described, but which was known to Raphael, half woman as he was, and which was, though imperfectly, yet marvelously, expressed in the Sistine Madonna)—that wonder enveloped him.

As the mother, holding her child, looks with a vague reverence upon it, so our Savior was looked upon by His mother when He was a child in her arms. Therefore, there is not a child on the globe that has not had a Forerunner.

As a child, Christ grew in stature and in knowledge. And that is as much a revelation as any other. Nor does it detract from a true and proper conception of divinity. For if one would make himself like unto his brethren he should begin where they began, and in every thing but sin should rise with them, step by step, all the way up.

Following Christ through His childhood, we find that He was subject to His parents. Unquestionably, He participated in their industries, and lived a working man, in a great northern province crowded with a population which included all manner of foreign elements, under the dominion of a foreign scepter.

There, in the midst of the distresses of the people—and they were exceedingly great—He grew up a working man; and there is nothing in the history or experience of the great mass of mankind who are working men that He is not fitted to sympathize with.

Has not this already touched a universal chord? Has it not even made skepticism admire it? Men who reject as history the details of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ—men who set aside His miracles and many of His words—will not let die the character which He has lived and impressed upon the world's thought and the world's imagination.

One of the most affecting things that I know of is the way in which men deal with this "fiction," as they call it. They take the life of Christ, and say that it is mythical; or they say that it is the life of an extraordinary man, of a genius, but not of a divine Being. Yet it is a life that believer and unbeliever alike will not let die. There are all sorts of men in the various schools,

who are saying of the nature and character which are attributed to Christ: "This is so wonderful a nature and character that the world would be impoverished if we were to lose it."

Such impressions have been produced by the circumstances in which Christ lived among men.

The miracles of Christ, looked at from the same point of view, have been very much perverted by discussions, and by not being looked at along the line in which they were meant to play.

They were simply charities.

They were, to be sure, alleged to have a certain influence among an abject and superstitious-minded people, but Christ himself under-valued them as moral evidence. They were alternative, as evidence. "If you will not believe me for my own sake," He says, "believe me for My works' sake."

He held that the radiant presentation of a divine nature ought to carry its own evidence; that when He appeared in speech, in conduct, in affluent affection, He was himself His own best evidence; and yet, if they, by reason of obtuseness, could not believe in Him otherwise, He called upon them to believe in Him for the sake of His miracles. That would be better than nothing. But He discouraged and dissuaded men from seeking after miracles or signs.

The miracles of Christ were, almost all of them, mere acts of benevolence.

Christ was poor. He had neither money nor raiment to give; and yet there was suffering around about Him, and He relieved it. The miracles of Christ were never

wrought in an ostentatious way. Never were they wrought for the purpose of exalting Himself. They were not employed where arguments failed, to carry men away by superstitious enthusiasm.

Multitudes resorted to Him for help—the sick, the blind, the deaf, lepers, all kinds of unfortunate people; and miracles were His means of bestowing charity upon them. No hospital had He to which He could send them; He was His own hospital. No retinue or army had He to send out among the masses of the Palestinian land. His own hand and voice were His universal instruments of mercy. His miracles were His general acts of kindness. As laid down in the Gospel, they represent the heart of God.

An error is often committed in regard to the beneficent deeds of the Redeemer and Savior of the world as to the purposes for which they were performed. They were never performed for His own sake. If there are apparent exceptions, there are no real ones.

For instance, at the baptism of Christ, the sound of a voice and the descent of a dove were not His own miracles. They were imposed on Him.

The greatest of all wonders which were wrought, in its dramatic beauty—the Transfiguration—was as much a miracle of mercy as was the miracle of the loaves and fishes. The disciples had lately been driven out of Galilee, and they had come to Jerusalem, and their faith needed resuscitation—as also did His own, since He was in the form of man, not only, but had the experiences of a man; and as they stood on the Mount He was, as it were, lifted up before them. Christ appeared to them

to be in the midst of a luminous atmosphere, and heavenly visitants were communing with Him.

Thus were His disciples strengthened and prepared for a remote period, when He should be crucified and buried out of their sight. It was intended that there should be a witchery and magic connected with this event which should hold them to their faith in spite of the lack of outward evidence.

The ministration thus to the higher spiritual nature of these disciples was as bread and wine to the lower bodily wants of men.

Now, if you adopt the philosophical view, and discuss the peculiarities of Christ's miracles purely from the standpoint of nature, you will reach certain results; but if you think they will be the results contemplated by the New Testament you are mistaken.

For instance, I reach forth my hand and draw a drowning man out of the water. Some one, hearing of it, and wishing to give a philosophical explanation of the act, takes a hand; he dissects it and paints it.

First, he paints the whole hand; then, underneath, he paints each finger separately; then, below, he paints all the muscles. After all this is done he writes a little treatise on the structure and adaptation of the hand. Then he says: "There is my interpretation of that act."

But it is not a dissected hand that the man thinks of, whom I seized at the risk of my life and rescued from the boiling flood. It does not occur to him that the hand which saved him was composed of bone, muscle, skin or any thing else. It was what was done by the hand that

interpreted itself to him, and that was the all-important thing.

Miracles discussed philosophically are out of the sphere of Christian experience. What we want to know, along the line of Christ's miraculous deeds, is, that they all aimed at one thing—namely, the opening up of a more bountiful conception of divine sympathy than could have been developed under any other circumstances.

Viewed in that light, they are a potential evidence, not so much of the power to which they have almost always been referred, but of the inner heart of Jesus. They are a powerful development of the divine bounty and sympathy and kindness; and who has the heart to dispute them on that line?

Looked at, also, from the same point of view—namely, that of the relations of Christ to the world for the sake of developing in men confidence in God and sympathy with Him—I remark that the Savior's suffering and death will receive new light. Every thing becomes involved and difficult and inoperative the very moment you discuss the history of Christ from the material and dynastic sides.

Why did Christ suffer?

If you say, in reply, "That He might redeem men from sin," you have said the whole; and just so soon as you begin to go back and ask "How did His suffering redeem men from death?" you are wandering right away from the heart of Christ to the cold Greek philosophical view of Him.

If you bring to me the tidings that my mother is dead—she who bore me, and hovered over all my infant days,

and tenderly loved me to the last—you open the floodgates of sympathy in my soul.

But suppose a physician comes to me and sits down by my side, and says:

"You understand, my young friend, that there are in the human frame a variety of systems—the vascular system, the bony system, the muscular system, the nervous system. You understand that there are vital organs—the stomach, the liver, the heart, the brain. Now, if you will listen, I will explain to you, in a philosophical manner, the causes of your mother's death. I will show you the way in which the blood ceased to circulate in her veins."

He wants to read me an anatomical lecture on the nature of the reasons of my mother's death!

If I have wandered away from home and friends, and my mother is dead, and you come to break the intelligence to me, I think you will leave out of your message every thing except the announcement of her death and her last words. You will say, if such be the fact: "She prayed for you, and she died exclaiming: 'My son! O my son!'"

And there is not a human heart that would not feel the power of a simple statement like this.

Tell me that He who is to be my Judge bowed His head and came into my condition; tell me that He was not ashamed to call men His brethren; tell me that, being in the form of God, and thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, He made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, that He might minister to men; tell me that He was tried and tempted

in all points like as we are, and yet without sin, that He might know how to succor those who were in trial and temptation; tell me that He died that His death might be a memorial of grace to men, and that He might expound to human understandings the nature of God—tell me these things, and I am satisfied.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Tell me what that means.

It is declared that Christ gave His life for the world. What is the meaning of that? Away with your barbaric notions! Away with the idea of marshaled forces! Away with the thought of imperial coercions!

That which I derive from the fragrance and sweetness of that magnificent sacrifice which was made in Christ's death is sufficient for me.

All that I want to know is that the heart of God is a heart that yearns for men—that it is a paternal heart, by which the universe is to be lifted up and saved. I do not stop to ask what is the relation of the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ to divine law; neither do I stop to ask what its relation is to the moral government of the universe; nor do I stop to ask what is its relation to the teaching of the Old Testament.

All these things may have their proper place in an outside work; but to discuss them and make them a part of Gospel truths is to go not only out of, but against, the example and spirit of the New Testament. For that which the sufferings and death of Christ mean to you and to me is that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die for it, and that in this sacrifice we have the manifestation, not only of the power, but of

the disposition of God to save us from animalism, from degradation, from guilt and from sin that breeds guilt, and to bring us into a knowledge of the spiritual life and make us sons of God.

Therefore, was there ever such a perversion as that by which theology has blunted the sensibilities and frozen the instincts of men, and presented to them a sort of Greek philosophy of the atonement of Christ Jesus—by which that sort of mechanical balancing of forces which men have called atonement has been urged upon men?

That which the human heart wanted and Christ and the New Testament gave was not a substantive noun, meaning some arrangement or plan, but the truth of a living, personal Savior.

I can say of these scholastic discussions: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

But yes, I do know where they have laid Him. They have laid Him under the dry bones of philosophy. They have covered Him up with slavish systems which impose upon men the performance of certain duties, the observance of given forms and ceremonies and obedience to certain rules, as the conditions of their salvation. Acts have been prescribed for men, when all that they wanted to know was that there was a stream flowing out from under the throne of God and for ever carrying to men life-giving influences. This stream, sent forth out of the center of God's throne, is the impulse of the centuries. It is the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation to every man that believes.

So accepted, the sufferings of Christ, His death, His

resurrection and glory, are powers; but the moment you turn them into a philosophy they are dead and dry, and they crackle under the pot of discussion until all its contents are evaporated and gone.

I remark, once more, that the views of Christ's resurrection, His ascension, His glorification and His reigning state in Heaven, as they are presented in the Scriptures, are exceedingly comforting, and exert an amazing influence; but when they are presented by close analysis, by a philosophical statement, they lose all their power and shake down upon us no fruit whatever.

Christ is our Forerunner; this we can form some conception of. He is the first-fruits of them that slept; this, while it brings no special idea to us, to the Jew brought most joyous associations. He is our Mediator; he is our Intercessor. We instinctively feel the force of the helpfulness of these figures.

Now, you will spoil it all if you go into a complete analysis, and specify every thing that you can imagine of a forerunner, and tell what he does do and what he does not do; if you undertake to draw an exact parallel between the first fruits of them that slept and the first fruits of the harvests of the Jews; if you undertake to dissect and regulate the offices of a mediator between God and man, or a mediator of the new covenant; if you undertake to describe the functions of an intercessor.

All the aroma will evaporate if you go thus into detail.

If you tell me that Christ died for men, and that He now lives in Heaven for them; that He is their Intercessor near to God, the Source of all power; that He

thinks of them and governs them; that He is bringing many sons and daughters home to glory; that He is our Forerunner in the world beyond; that He is our Solicitor in court—if you tell me these things, I am comforted.

But the more you undertake to refine these metaphors and reduce them to exactitude, the more you take away the comfort which might be derived from them. Let them stand in their simplicity, if you would have them powerful in their influence upon the imagination, the heart and the life.

If you take a cluster of flowers just as they are, with the dew on them, how exquisite they are! But you tarnish them by just so much as you meddle with them. Every one who dissects a flower must make up his mind to lose it.

That sweetest flower of Heaven, from which exhales perfume for ever and for ever; that dearest and noblest conception that the human imagination ever gathered out of father and mother, out of leader and benefactor, out of shepherd and protector, out of companion and brother and friend; all that ever was gracious in government—these various elements, rising together, are an interpretation, in a kind of large and vague way, to the imagination, and through the imagination to the heart, that there is, at the center of universal authority toward which we are all going, One who cares for us—One who bears our burdens—One who guides our career—One who hears our cry—and One, though He does not interpret himself to us, who will at last make it plain that all things have worked together for the good of those that have trusted in Him.

Now, a man, as a philoscpher, may preach Christ from beginning to end, and yet his people may grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ; but that is not the general result of such preaching.

The way is to preach Christ, and to aim at preaching Christ, so that the souls of the people shall be built up in the Lord Jesus Christ; and it is exactly in this way that I have desired to preach Christ among you.

O my brethren! We are not far from the end of our journey. It matters very little what this world and time have for us. The other world is near to us, and it matters every thing how we shall land there. We have our burdens, our crosses, our poignant sorrows, sickness and death, embarrassments, bankruptcy, trials, and if not outward scourgings yet inward scourgings.

We are not exempt from the great lot of mankind; and we go crying often with prone heads. We are like bulrushes before the wind—bowed down to the very Earth. And is it a comfort for you to know that there is a God who thinks of you?

Know that there is One who is crying out in the silence, if you could only by your spiritual hearing listen, saying: "Come boldly to the throne of grace, and obtain mercy and help in time of need."

O throne of iron, from which have been launched terrible lightnings and thunders that have daunted men! O throne of crystal, that has coldly thrown out beams upon the intellect of mankind! O throne of mystery, around about which have been clouds and darkness! O throne of Grace, where He sits regnant who was my brother, who has tasted of my lot, who knows my

trouble, my sorrow, my yearning and longing for immortality! O Jesus, crowned, not for Thine own glory, but with power of love for the emancipation of all struggling spirits, Thou art my God!

And is He your God?

Ah, yes! I beseech every one who has any trouble —every one who needs help—to try the help of God given through Jesus in faith and trust. You can not please Him better. Come, lay down your anxiety and your strivings; lift up your heart, and believe that He who has guided His people like a flock will guide you, and perfect you, and bring you home to immortality.

You are under a great misapprehension if you think that Christ, except when going through His passion, was an unhappy man.

I have read with great care and scrutiny the history of His early life, and I am satisfied that, except during the last thirty days of His career, when He suffered for sacrificial purposes, He was happy.

The early part of Christ's life was a beautiful one. He was a noble Jew, and He was admired of His countrymen—not because they thought Him to be, in the way that we do, abstractly a divine personage—but because they thought Him to be about the greatest specimen of a Jew that had ever appeared in their nation. He was a prophet to them.

Why was He so much to them? Because He typified the best things which had been known in the Jewish religion for a thousand years. He stood as a glowing example of their ideals. They were mistaken in their supposition that He was to be at the head of their phys-

ical kingdom, and to add to their power, dominating and governing in a material point of view; but He was their ideal so far as manhood and patriotism were concerned.

In all His early years He was loved and followed. He had that which made every man happy. He possessed the power to make men happy with the look of His eye. He had the power of teaching men to extract honey from rebuke and sorrow. He had power to dry the tear of bereavement and to assuage the pain of suffering. He had the power to carpet the earth with flowers. He had the power to quiet the storm. Light and darkness were His ministers of mercy. Where He went men felt the breath of Spring, the balm of Summer and the glory and richness of Autumn.

His life, as a whole, was a beautiful exemplification of how happy religion ought to make men.

NICODEMUS.

One of the most thoroughly misrepresented men in the Holy Scripture is Nicodemus. He was a man of great sagacity and purity of life. So far as we have any record, or can deduce any inferences from the facts, he was a superior man, having but one lack. He had not the demonstrative element in him to any considerable degree. He was not a bustler; he was not a talker; he was not a man who made the most of every thing he did.

You will recollect that at this time John was baptizing; that Jesus had been baptized, and that the devout

Jews were thinking very seriously about baptism into the new kingdom; and Nicodemus, as a very conscientious man, doubtless had it in his mind and in his purpose to be baptized as a fresh start in life, or in righteousness.

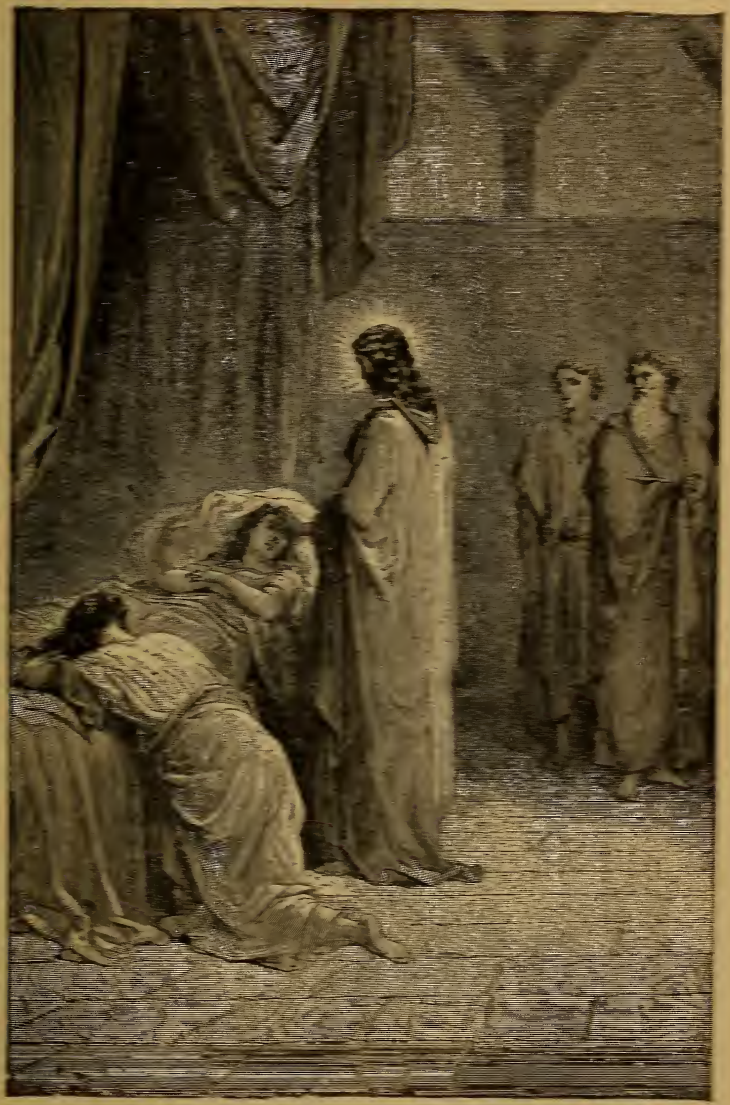
Jesus said to Nicodemus: "It is necessary to be more than baptized." He doubtless pointed to something in his thought and feeling. It was necessary that there should be the water and the Holy Ghost. It was the additional element of the divine Spirit that was to be emphatic.

It is said that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night for fear of the Jews, and that therefore he was a timid and cowardly man; but he did not go to Jesus by night for fear of the Jews.

That statement is made up by taking two passages, one of which is contained in another part of John's Gospel, where it says that many rulers spoke of Christ, but for fear of the Jews did not come to Him.

That sentence has been taken and put upon Nicodemus; and the theory has always been that he came to Jesus by night for fear of the Jews. But unquestionably he was one of the listeners that heard the discourses of our Savior to the great crowd, and was not, like the most of them, satisfied with the little that he took in. That which he heard of Christ touched a feeling which resided very deep in his nature. This was a man that he wanted to see.

A very great soul carries in itself unexpressed and inexpressible thoughts and yearnings and desires; and to the greatest there is nothing so joyful as to find some one that is greater, who can solve or succor or strengthen or



Raising of The Daughter of Jairus.
From the Painting by Gustave Doré.

enlighten ; and Nicodemus came to Christ by night simply because only then could he sit down for a meal, pour himself out, and ask enlightenment.

It was not cowardice ; it was hunger—soul hunger—that brought him by night to Christ. Then only could he find what he longed for.

A strange kind of cowardice his was !

When the Savior's career was well advanced, and the templars had determined on His destruction, Nicodemus, being a member of the Sanhedrim—that is, of the highest council of the Jews ; he, being in honor, having the class feeling, knowing that they had determined on the death of Christ ; he, when the messengers came back and reported that "never man spake like this man," rebuked his fellows in the Sanhedrim, who scornfully derided, saying : "These people—these coarse, vulgar folk—do not know the law."

Nicodemus, standing among his own peers, who were all leagued and bonded against Christ, calmly asked this question : "Doth our law condemn any man until he is heard ?"

Is that cowardice, for a man to stand up among those around about him, in a time of Christ's peril and in a time when men had their faces set on His destruction, and calmly bring their own laws home to them, and rebuke them ?

And when all was over, when the crucifixion was past; when the terrible drama had been enacted ; when the disciples were all scattered, and there was not one of them to take care of the remains of their Master, Joseph of Arimathea got leave to take charge of the body ; and

then it was that Nicodemus went with Joseph of Arimathea, and took the body of Christ, and embalmed it and buried it.

Were these the deeds of a coward?

I tell you, Nicodemus was one of the calmest and most courageous of the men who appeared in the New Testament, and his name should no longer be a synonym for timidity. It should rather be a synonym for conscientiousness, for quietness and for courage—a courage that is genuine and real.

Anybody can be courageous with a crowd, but very few men can be courageous against a crowd. Anybody can be courageous with the stream of public sentiment, but it is hard for a man to be courageous standing alone. Nicodemus could do that.

Now, there were a great many men in Jerusalem; but it is likely that if you had tried you would scarcely have found another man who was the peer of Nicodemus for various excellences; and it was all the more remarkable that to such a man Jesus declared: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." "Ye must be born again."

PAUL.

"PUT on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day."

By nature Paul was a general. He had all those sympathetic and magnetic qualities which tended powerfully to influence men. He had the sense, as it may be said, of mankind. He knew their feelings. He knew how to approach them. He had an intense nature. He was full of allowable ingenuity and strategy in the art of thinking. His figures are not meditative. They are almost never drawn from the quiet aspects of nature. There is very little of simple sweetness and of simple beauty in them.

The idea of beauty seems hardly to have entered into Paul's mind.

It is inconceivable that a man should have gone to Athens in the days of its glory, and seen that which one might almost give a life to see, and should have left no word about it. No statue glitters in his reminiscences. Of no temple did he give any description. The gorgeousness and glory of Grecian painting and Grecian art at large seem to have left on his mind almost no trace. Nor do we find anywhere a sense of the beautiful in his mind and thought.

But wherever men strove to the uttermost, there he saw something.

Paul's whole soul was filled with the thought of men —men developed to energy. Whatever was brought forth anywhere of skill and zeal and endeavor furnished him themes for contemplation. Men practicing athletic games, men at work, soldiers in armies—these provided him with illustrations. Though some of his figures are drawn from the household, some from civil life and some from governments, they are all astir. They move, they

move. It could not have been otherwise. The best pointed arrow may go leisurely flying through the air from a weak bow; but even a poor arrow whizzes from a bow of steel. Whatever the figures were, when Paul let them fly they went.

In the instances before us, he brings up before the mind the equipment of an old Roman soldier, covered with iron from head to foot—waiting for the attack and standing to the uttermost.

Now, Christ came to put an end to war. He was the Prince of peace and good-will toward men; and it is strange enough that a warlike figure should have been chosen to designate the life of a follower of Christ. Yet, there was no unfitness in it.

The spiritual conflicts of men, or their endeavors to live aright—evading, resisting, overcoming, subduing utterly or annihilating spiritual enemies—these are a part of the great warfare in life; and so the illustration is not an unfit one. It implies the all-surrounding dangers that beset a Christian man, and the need of most ample and thorough preparation on the part of every Christian for the life conflict.

According to Apostle Paul's view, every one who would rise into a full Christian state of mind, and abide in it, must put forth efforts to that end.

We can not inherit religion. We may inherit, more or less, a moral constitution; we may inherit aptitudes in the direction of religious thought and religious emotion. But character was never born, nor does it ever come by accident. Character is built up from the very foundation. It is but another name for consecutive hab-

its; and habits are the results to which men come by successive and continuous operations of their own will.

Nothing, more than does a high religious character, demands that men should put forth the utmost exertions, and exertions long continued.

The adversaries which the Apostle mentions here are worthy of our regard for a moment:

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood."

That is, we do not wrestle against them principally. We are not to take our measure from them. We wrestle against governments, against the rulers of the world—against powers, whatever they may be and wherever they may be.

"We wrestle against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day."

There is something in this very obscurity; there is something in this very amplitude of description of dangers above, dangers below, dangers on every side—dangers from common men, dangers from magistrates, dangers from governments, dangers from occupations, dangers from within and from without, dangers everywhere and always, dangers that environ us in every way, dangers proceeding from all sorts of temptation.

There is something in these things which would seem to make it necessary for us to arm ourselves, and to never cease watching and fortifying ourselves against the multitudes of evils which surround us. We are nowhere and at no time free from liabilities to temptation and downfall.

The customs and usages of life in business or pleasure all tend powerfully to educate, not the highest nature but the lowest feelings, as they are conducted by men. For, though I do aver that the course of nature and the normal operations of society are moral educators, and were designed to be such, and have inherent tendencies which are constantly striving to produce in men a moral basis and a moral character, yet these natural schools where men are educated to higher and truer manliness are constantly perverted. They are under influences which tend to make them false educators; so that this world, which should teach men industry, frugality, foresight, sympathy man with man, kindness, punctuality, truth, honor and fairness, is teaching them these things in a measure; but, after all, it teaches them pride, inordinate self-reliance, vanity, avarice, selfishness and brutal combativeness. It fills them with all manner of unregulated passions and appetites.

But you can not avoid this.

If you go out of the world to get rid of the temptations which spring from without, you fall upon temptations that spring from within. For no man is in such fatal danger as the man who is lazy, and who is with himself alone or mainly. There are no temptations which work such mean fermentations as those which spring upon men who live solitary lives.

Though outward associations, by turning a man unduly one way or another, may impair the moral tone of his character to a certain extent; yet they carry with them a sanitary influence, many of them. A man who has broken away from his fellows, and retired from life;

a man who feels at liberty to go out from the great battle of manhood, and sequester himself, and dwell in his own sweet meditations, and live for his own perfection; one who avoids burdens, and yokes, and conflicts, and dangers—such a man is the meanest of men. There is in him a lack of pluck, a lack of stamina, a lack of moral enterprise, a lack of generosity, a lack of large benevolence—all of which are indispensable to manhood.

So, then, you can not go out of life if you would. You meet the grim devil of selfishness and the minor evils of life more in solitude than anywhere else.

In life you meet all the fiery seductions which come from one spirit or another of the passions and appetites which are inflamed among men—the strong biasing the weak, and those of inordinate means sweeping away those who have little or no means, and the wise domineering over the simple.

If you go into the Church, it has its dangers and its temptations. If you go into the Exchange, it has its own liabilities and perils. If you go into the street, you find dangers there. In the wilderness, on the highway, on the sea—in foreign lands, at home—doing the work of morality, performing the necessary economic duties of human life, in high positions and in low—everywhere men are surrounded by temptations and by evils; and no man can avoid them or evade them. He can not shut himself out from them.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

How splendidly the old Jewish feeling comes out in

that third chapter of Galatians! Paul stood in Athens a veritable Jew. The temples glistened on every side of him. The streets were lined with statues, a single one of which is the envy of modern nations.

But through all these the moral element broke; and that which occupied the Apostle's attention was the preaching of the true Jehovah, who dwelt not in any temple; who could not be worshiped by men's hands bringing various offerings into the temple; who was not a God of gold, or silver, or precious stones, or ivory, or marble, or what-not, but a God who made all these things, and who united the whole human race under Him into one great brotherhood.

This was the Apostle's thought, and this is essentially his annunciation here—the substantial unity of the human family.

God's kingdom—that is, the ideal mankind, looked at in the light and under the influence of Jesus Christ—is not divided up by artificial lines, but is an absolute united brotherhood.

From the spiritual plane, looking down upon the human race, it is one great family; and as God is the Father, the whole race is His household, and all the diverse scattered elements of the human family are, after all, interiorly grouped together, in the eye of God and of His providence, as one great unity, one vast brotherhood.

This truth, which in our time is becoming so much insisted upon, is not a vague sentiment. Still less is it sentimentality. The brotherhood of the race of mankind rests on well defined ideas. It has a substratum.

It has most important relations and uses. The essential likeness of all the races on earth indicates their unity.

One of the most interesting studies in the New Testament is the progress of the development which may be traced in the mind of Apostle Paul.

From the time that he entered upon a Christian life to the time that he left it, there was in him, as there is or ought to be in every noble-minded person, a steady development and growth; so that the last part of his life was vastly richer than the earlier parts of it—more tender I mean.

I do not refer to his conduct, for of that we know little; but there is reflected from his later writings a light purer, more transcendently elevated, than that which belonged to his earlier writings. For, whatever doctrine of inspiration you may hold, it is perfectly certain that inspiration always carries with it something of the material through which it acts, and that therefore human intelligence is a part of it, so that the laws of that intelligence are also taken into consideration.

There is no such thing as a divine revelation or a divine inspiration which takes out of the divine nature, as it were, the picture of a truth, and puts it into the world without any human mixture. Material things are discovered to us through human organs; and the progress of knowing the things which we see or hear implies the exercise, the education and the finer development of the senses themselves. And that which is true of the lower nature or mind of man is still more true of the higher reason, which works through the moral sense and perceives interior divine truths, which are as much higher

that common truths as the soul is higher than the body. Now, that part of the Apostle's life, near its close, when he was writing in prison, was the most notable part.

The studies—the scenes of labor—of a great many remarkable men have been preserved, and have been visited. I went to see where Jonathan Edwards wrote his "Treatise on the Will," in old Stockbridge, and sat down in the chair that he used, and at the table where he worked.

In Scotland, I went to the house where John Knox lived, and sat down in his study room.

I went, in Geneva, to the church where John Calvin preached, and went into the pulpit where he so many times stood.

I should be glad if Bedford Jail were yet standing, and I could go into that, and could see where it was that John Bunyan wrote his memorable "Pilgrim's Progress."

But of all places on earth, the one that I would visit first, if it were yet in existence and I could, would be the sepulcher of the Savior; and next to that would be the old Roman prison where Paul wrote.

Manacled and watched over by the ever-present sentry, Paul sent forth from that dark, cold and desolate spot a light which has redeemed captivity; which has dissipated darkness; which has inspired manhood; and which not only has made all mankind akin one to another, but has united this visible world with the invisible spiritual kingdom.

In the last letters which Paul wrote, during the closing years of his life, he was caught up, and was rendered intensely conscious of the divine nature—of the riches

that were in God, revealed through Christ. It was made still larger to his comprehension by the revelation of the Holy Ghost, which was given to him as it is given to all those who are prepared for it and will take it.

This was the direction in which Paul's mind traveled as he grew richer, stronger and older—that is, younger; because the older we grow the nearer we are to being born into the spiritual world, which is the true birth. The nearer Paul came to that world, the more experience he had, and the more it seemed to concentrate upon this thought—the exceeding riches of God in goodness, in grace, in mercy, in love, in kindness, in every thing.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things."

These were among the very last words that were penned by Paul. He was in prison, and he wrote them with a manacled hand, chained to a soldier, rejoicing that even his bonds were blest, and that the heroism of his suffering made many bold to speak the truth of Christ —even in the household of the despot who soon sought and took his life; so that this light breaks out from the darkness of the dungeon.

How Paul's last days were spent we know not. There was no decline by reason of sickness. The waste—the decay—we are spared an account of from him.

He rises as a spirit burning with the most noble sentiments, with the most heroic feelings, and with a life astonishing by its disinterestedness, by its fervor, by its

wonderful success—a life which did not end with the falling of the body, for he rose to a noble sphere, to join in higher labors; and the truths which he had uttered came on down through the generations which followed.

There never have been any brighter scenes than those through which Apostle Paul passed; and there has never been a man who, on so high a level of enthusiastic sentiment, has equaled or been fit to be likened to him. Aside from Christ, he is the one shining light of the New Testament dispensation—standing there as Moses stood in the Old Testament dispensation.

Though the Jews, running far back in their thoughts toward antiquity, spoke evermore with veneration of the founders of their nation—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and not improperly, yet all these great names are mere shadows. They have left no special memorial—no great truth which they bore and rounded out. They are landmarks very much as those stone-heap witnesses were which the Israelites were accustomed to build on great occasions.

Moses had a creative nature, and he left institutions, laws and methods which have made the world wiser and better to this day; and John and Paul are the two natures of the New Testament who, inflamed by Jesus, were made to be significantly His great forces.

John represents the interior and thoughtful and undemonstrative manhood; but, if he be larger and nobler in some respects, yet, after all, his revelation to the world, as an active force, is not so great as that of Paul. John may be, and of himself, perhaps, deeper and

higher; but as a regenerating power, acting upon the world, Paul, who was made up of profound personal experience, with an intense practical nature, far transcends John in his sphere—in the width of it and in its force.

It is quite noticeable that he who has developed in modern times, on religious grounds, the doctrine of the sacredness of the individual man, or the doctrine of the nobility of manhood, should himself have been brought up, I might almost say, a besotted Pharisee.

A Pharisee is one who worships instruments.

Whoever believes that churches, or books, or institutions, or customs, are more valuable than men is a Pharisee; and, on the other hand, whoever believes that man is transcendently more valuable than his institutions, is a Paulist—that is to say, he is a Christman, or Christian. For this idea was borrowed by Apostle Paul from Jesus, who, never disdaining institutions, never disdaining the customs of his country, was adhered to enthusiastically by the common people, because he so well represented to them the noblest notion of a Jew. He was a servant to their sabbaths and synagogues and modes of worship; and yet, after all, through His obedience to these things, there shone out in him, more and more to the end, the conception that the unit of value in the universe is living intelligence.

Man makes society; man fashions communities; man frames institutions; but his value does not depend upon what he does in the framing of institutions. He is not like a stone that goes into a wall, and helps to build a palace or a fort, and is good for nothing, except, as the fort or the palace is good. He is not like a brick, compressed,

and made shapely, in order that it may be laid just so with line and trowel. He is a living being, in and of himself; and all society, all religion, all churches, all institutions, come as servants to him, who is the master of them, who is the one for whom they were created, and who is independent of them—or can be, or ought to be, if he is not.

It is because these things help a man to measure manliness—it is because they bring in their hand that which makes him broader and stronger and richer—that they are valuable to him; and the moment they cease to do that, he ceases to be amenable to them.

Just as soon as this large conception of the liberty of manhood, of the liberty wherewith Christ makes men free, of the liberty which all men enter into when they are by the Divine Spirit brought into line, not in their lower animal nature, but in their reason, in their moral sentiments and in that intuition which comes from the higher feelings—just as soon as this large conception of liberty takes possession of a man, and he lives according to it, he becomes free.

For whatever things men are accustomed to do because the law says they shall, under the influence of this new conception they do because they like to do them. They act voluntarily. It is pleasanter for them to do right than to do wrong—just as it is pleasanter for a musician to make chords than to make discords.

A man may rise to a plane where he speaks the truth because it is sweeter to speak the truth than to speak falsehood. A man may be honest because he feels that honesty is intrinsically better to him than dishonesty.

And so, in every place, that which men do by law

and by rule, they come at last to do by volition. In the highest reach of which we have any notion upon Earth, men do things involuntarily and automatically.

Paul was one who cared for nothing so much as for that ennobled manhood which is the result of the divine influence upon the human soul.

The inflections in Paul's writings which dissuade from every form of evil, and exhort to every form of good, are simply marvelous.

Men have read those writings in order to frame theologies—and they have had business on hand to do that. It has been assumed, generally, that out of the New Testament decrees—at least, so far as the whole will of God is concerned—you can frame the outlines of the divine government, of the divine attributes, and of the divine purposes, as well as the outcome of the divine economy in time.

Men have supposed that from the New Testament should be extracted these great elements, and they have been busy in attempting to mark them out; whereas, that for which the New Testament is remarkable—that which it has been to a very large extent recognized and employed as being—is that it deals with the formation of a beautiful and noble manhood.

Paul was the apostle of manhood—manhood in Jesus Christ, He being both the model and the inspiration.

Paul's key-note was this—that manhood resided in the moral dispositions of men.

When everything else had failed, when all knowledge had passed away, when the speaking of languages, the prophesying, the teaching, the arguing, was done; when

even the dim vision ceased; when we saw face to face, and knew as we were known, all the transient being swept aside—then three things would still abide, and would be positive, certain and universal; and these three things were—what?

Reason, genius, imagination?

No; Faith, Hope, Love.

Those were the three things that death had no power over, and that would emerge in the radiance of the upper sphere, and there exist through all eternity.

Manhood, with the apostle, consisted in glorious emotive dispositions. Everything else that was given to man was, in his estimation, an instrument. That is, these were the man, and the other things were his hands. Paul never despised reasoning. It sometimes seems as though he despised it; but it is only as a man dispises a servant who is in his master's chair. He likes the servant well enough, but wants him in his own place.

Paul did not despise reasoning; and there was no more masterly reasoning than his, considering the time in which he lived, considering the purposes which he had in view, and considering the instruments which he employed. His argumentation is correct if you do not press it too narrowly or too closely. It is the vice of almost all interpreters of the Bible to attempt to reduce to scientific systems ideas that belong to the higher range of thought.

Paul held to two things. You will recollect how, in the seventh chapter of Romans, he develops his two-nature idea:

"We know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal,

sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

In other words, he said: "I have two natures. I have a flesh nature, an outside nature, and that keeps sinning; and then I have another nature—an inside, a spiritual nature—and that does not like sinning; and with my heart-power, my conscience-power, my love-power, with the power of the divine element that is in me, I look and see what this body outside, which clothes me, is trying to do. And here are two I's that are fighting. The inside I is arrayed against the outside I; and the outside has the advantage."

Paul was like a child on a very vicious horse, that ran away with him, though he did not want to be run away with. He held him in with all his might, but he could not stop him.

Paul goes on to say:

"I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it."

That is to say, "My real manhood, the essential I, which I regard as Paul—that I which shall not die, and which shall appear unto the resurrection, and triumph through the eternal—that I does not do the evil. It is the base I, it is the animal I, that does it."

This two-root notion of Paul's is the key-note to his philosophy. The one nature is visible and the other is invisible; the one is developed by the material globe and its circumstances, and the other is developed by the schooling of divine grace.

Now, if this be manhood; if this be the point of value; if this be the end to be sought in man's development; if this spiritual, dispositional, interior manhood is the center of his being, then you will begin to wonder why it is that he is strong when he is weak. It is when the under-Paul is weak that the upper-Paul gets strong. It is when the outside-Paul is under reproaches and suffering that the inside-Paul gets a chance to assert himself. It is when the flesh-life, the dropping, the dying part is powerless, that the undying part, that part which is of God, that part which is in affiliation, in sympathy, and in communion with the Divine, and that shall mingle therewith without losing its identity, shall triumph.

As when the keeper is away, and the door is open, the prisoner can go out and take the sun and air, but when the keeper comes back, the prisoner is sent to his dungeon again; so, when the imprisoning body goes out, the enclosed Paul comes forth and rejoices itself in light and freedom, but when that body comes back, the temporarily released Paul is imprisoned once more.

"Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are

not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Real manhood, according to Paul's idea, is developed by the battering of the outward or flesh man. He considered that whatever diminished the outward man built up the inward man. He regarded as strength to his disciples whatever thing put them upon the necessity of living by their interior; by their moral intuitions; by their imagination working in connection with religious things. Whatever losses of goods, or friends, or affections, or successes, or occupations, drove men to the higher realm which was in themselves, the world would say were reproaches, misfortunes, infirmities, deprivations; but God would say of them, since he sees what comes of them, that they are opportunities; that they are transfigurations; that they are augmentations. Interior manhood grows while the outward man diminishes.

And so Paul's infirmities were such as would generally be regarded as misfortunes. It is not pleasant for a man to be, as Paul was, of contemptible appearance, and to know it. It does not matter whether a man is handsome or homely if he thinks he is handsome; but it makes a great deal of difference when a man has intense sensibility, to know that he is uncomely.

Paul's nature was as sensitive as an æolian harp. Not a breeze that would not stir an aspen leaf but made him quiver. All through his letters we see that everything he thought of in Heaven, on earth, or in hell, he thought of from the standpoint of his own personal feeling and experience. His writings are one continuous string of *I, I, I; me, me, me; my, my, my.* There never

was raised upon the globe another such dome of exquisite sensibility as we find in Paul. And yet, his whole being was so absolutely given up to others that reading his letters through you would not think of his egotism at all. He was so perfectly absorbed in his work in behalf of his fellows that his thought of himself was but the thought of the great central Jesus.

Now, he was a Jew ; and Jews were built up through generations of good stuff. There never was any other such stock as the Jewish stock. And, as he said, he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was thoroughbred. He had received that peculiar education which belonged to the Pharisees, putting the greatest value upon rituals, ordinances, days, seasons, methods and instruments. A Pharisee of the old form is a man who worships the instrument more than the end. And that was Paul eminently. Then, he was an intense lover of his country, as well as of his kind, and he was vomited out, having fallen from the confidence of his people, and been driven into the desert of Arabia, a wanderer ; and he felt as if he was the offscouring of the earth. John never seems to have felt that he was despised ; Peter never spoke of himself as suffering any such extremity ; but Paul was subjected to trials and hardships on every hand, odium was everywhere heaped upon him by his fellow-men ; and such was his sensibility of suffering from these causes that he declared, all the way through his life, that he died deaths daily. And yet, in spite of all that he endured of pain and ignominy, he rose up and said, "I rejoice." Why did he rejoice ? Let him answer. "Because when I am weak I am strong." But if Christ had

not found out that inner Paul, by divesting it of the outward and lower Paul, and letting it out, I never should have had such a glorious ideal as I have now, lifted far above any ordinary thought of manhood. This Paul it was who said, "I rejoice in those infirmities which made a man of me in Christ Jesus."

Paul says, "I am a debtor."

We begin to draw near to that class of ideas from which we are to interpret his meaning. We may imagine in what respect he was a debtor to the Jews; he had received much from them. But what had he received from the Greeks, that he was bound to pay back? Was he a disciple of their philosophy? He was not. Had he received from their bounty in the matter of art? No. One of the most striking things in history is the fact that Paul abode in Athens, and wrote about it, without having any impression made upon his imaginative mind, apparently, by its statues, its pictures, or its temples. The most gorgeous period of Grecian art poured its light on his path, and he never mentioned it. The New Testament is as dead to art-beauty as though it had been written by a hermit in an Egyptian pyramid, who had never seen the light of the sun. Then, what did he owe to the Greeks? Not philosophy, not art, and certainly not religion, which was feticism. What was there that he owed to the Gentiles—the great outlying barbaric multitude, as the Greeks would call them, or to the great multitude of Gentiles, as the Jews would call them? They had no revelation; they were in darkness; and he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, brought up in such a way that through him have come

the light of God and Divine influences to the human race. He knew his mission. He was not a man who was likely not to know it. And what did he pay? Not a debt of literature, nor of art, nor of civil policy. Not a debt of pecuniary obligation; not any ordinary debt. He had nothing from all these outside sources. On the other hand, he was perpetually laying others under obligation by enlarging their horizon; by giving them nobler conceptions of manhood; by attempting to bring out and unfold higher and better elements of humanity; by changing the prevailing ideas of civility; by giving a new soul to law, and a new heart to national life. He was pouring out the spirit of civilization, and laying the foundation of after excellence.

What debt could he owe? And yet said he, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise." What could that debt be? Not interchange of values, as I have already intimated. It must have lain wholly in a condition of want which, to his moral consciousness, existed outside of himself, and his own conscious fullness of supply. The whole barbaric world was without the true knowledge of God; he had that knowledge; and he owed it to every man who had it not. And the civilized world was, in these respects, without the true inspiration.

Paul had that inspiration; and he owed it to them, simply because they did not have it; and his debt to them was founded on this law of benevolence of which I have been speaking, which is to supersede selfishness, and according to which those who have are indebted to those who have not, the world over.

Secondly, the introduction of the malign element as a moral force, by which it has been attempted to extend Christianity, has been another capital offense and another reason why so little progress has been made in spreading the Gospel. When Paul, in a reminiscence of his labor among the Corinthians, gives some account of himself, he speaks as if he had paused on going into Corinth.

Naturally he must have done so; he must have said to himself, "Here am I, a wandering Jew, going to the most dissolute, the richest and the most elegant city of Greece; a city, world-renowned for pleasure; a city full of sophists, full of philosophers, full of men of science and literature; and now, how shall I start this new religion there?"

"Well, I determined," said he, "not to know anything among you as a source of power except Christ,—and Him crucified. I determined to disclose to you a moral phenomenon—namely, that the innate disposition of God is manifested in this: that He sent down into the world His Son, who took upon Himself the human form, and subjected Himself to human law, and was willing to suffer, and to suffer in the lowest and most ignominious way, for the sake of giving his life a ransom for many. I determined to rely, for the secret of my power, upon this fact and the moral qualities which grow out of it, as naturally related to human sensibility."

The writings of the apostle are full of pathos and full of earnestness, and they recognize, in the most eminent degree, the conflicts of life; but the very spirit

of hope and joy pervades them. They always move with the step of victory.

There is nowhere else, in an equal compass, such exaltation or exultation, I think, as is to be found in the writings of the apostles, and pre-eminently in those of Paul, the sufferer and the rejoicer. I know not where you will find, if you will come into the full spirit of it, a more magnificent instance of it than that which is recorded in the closing words of the eighth of Romans, where he has been speaking of the sufferings of the whole world; where he looks upon the creature delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and says, "The whole creation is going on still groaning, and it is still travailing in pain." And then, after reasoning on all the light and darkness in which the world moves, he says:

"What shall we say, then, to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemeth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

And now look at this magnificent defiance with which he throws down the gauntlet to every conceivable form of earthly misfortune:

"Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,

"For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, [and where is there such another magnificent burst of joy and cheer as this?] in all these things, [in tribulation, and distress, and persecution, and famine, and nakedness, and peril, and sword] we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded [and now his thought overleaps the bounds of time and earth, and takes in the universe] that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

Now, I ask you whether the whole view of the Christian religion, as it is laid down in the New Testament, is not one of joyfulness—whether that is not the pre-eminent element, the genius of it. I ask you whether the religious life which has been handed down to us from the church of the mediæval ages is not, after all, so stained through with a sense of melancholy and restriction and loss and narrowness and suffering, that the popular impression is, that religion, if not morose, is yet moody and melancholy, sad and sorrowful; that its joys lie in the things that are to be in the life which is to come, and not in the thing itself. I ask you whether the ascetic view has not been preached, and is not still preached, unconsciously, by men who disown it in terms, and who yet make representations of great doctrines in such a way as to impress the minds of their fellow-men with the conviction that to do the things that are noblest, best, divinest, in accordance with the highest law of true

manhood, requires great suffering; and that it requires a special dispensation of grace to enable men to do those things, because they are not only so hard, but so painful in the doing.

We are not to understand, from the teaching of the apostle, that human wisdom or philosophy is to be despised. In the lower realms of life, not only is it indispensable, but it is noble. None exercise it with greater judgment than the apostle himself did; and there is much of the truth that belongs to the material creation. There are large realms of truth that belong to the lower forms of man's own mind and nature, which are to be discovered by the proper use of the reason, acting under conditions of philosophy; and although this may have carried with it a certain sort of criticism, directly or indirectly, of the Grecian schemes of philosophy, yet there was in them a great power of usefulness.

Nothing can reach down through thousands of years, holding the thoughts of men in delightful thrall, which is altogether inapt or foolish, and yet, although a spade is one of the best things a gardener can have, it would be a very poor thing for a mother to try to feed her babe with. Although the reason may be admirable, and the uses of it noble, in the lower forms, yet there are certain realms of truth, there are certain sorts of knowledge, for which the reason is not adapted.

It is not, then, to be understood that the Apostle Paul derided intellection, or systems of philosophy, but that he had a higher thought in his mind than the thought of these things.

So, again, it is not to be supposed that the Apostle

Paul scoffed at the skillful presentation of truths to men, or a wise approach with knowledge to men's minds; for he himself was a pattern. No more adroit man was ever known. No man, standing among Pharisees, or Sadducees, or any others, recognized more than he the necessity of adapting his teaching to those whom he taught, and to the circumstances in which he taught.

When, therefore, he says that he did not come with the wisdom of words, it is not to be understood as being a general fling at rhetorical or oratorical modes of handling the truth; it is to be understood, rather, as implying that there are some things which the most skillful oratory cannot touch; that there are deeper truths, higher realms, than any which can be reached by rhetoric.

Neither did he invalidate in this declaration, those views and representations of God which were already familiar to the Jews, and which pervade the Old Testament.

The glory of God as Creator; his sovereignty as Governor; his providence as Administrator—these in various ways he often recognized; but there is something more than these in the divine nature.

There is something more than a dynastic God; something more than a rational God; something more than a God of the heaven and of the earth, creating material forms, and administering an economy of laws.

There was something transcendently more noble, deeper, higher, wider, and more influential than the current views of the divine nature.

That which was built up, and that which was conveyed to the minds of men by material figures drawn

from the works of creation, from the procession of armies, from the power of the mightiest sovereigns, from those things which men most enjoy and most admire in these elements in their own appropriate sphere—this was wise and helpful in leading men's thoughts up to a consideration of the true God ; but then, when one had approached to the central Sovereign of the universe, there was a disposition as well as a government.

There was a God in his relations to the great creation ; but there was a God in his relation to his own children.

A magistrate is allowed to have no feelings, and yet behind all magistracy is the father, the husband, and the friend ; so behind and within the sovereignty of God, there was the personal and dispositional element of the divine nature ; and it was this that the apostle caught.

Perhaps more certain, more anxiously, and more urgently than any other one, does he express this interior and personal disposition of God, as made manifest in the Lord Jesus Christ ; and it is this that gives us some insight or hint as to the singular use of language which he employs :

"Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross [why did he not say the preaching of *Christ?* He, as it were, changed the name. Why, instead of using that glorious Name that is above every name, should he have said, 'The preaching of the cross'—not, The preaching of Christ—not, The preaching of that gospel system, that system of good news that has irradi-

ated the world, and filled the world with joy? Why should he have said, The preaching of the *cross*—that bloody and hateful instrument of despotism and cruelty?] is to them that perish foolishness [Yes, and it is to this day); but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

What! The cross the power of God? In the passage which I read, Paul says:

"I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

In other words, he determined not to know Jesus Christ as he walked in Galilee; as he led captive the throngs of the people; as he stood in the temple, meeting and matching his adversaries, and unfolding, serenely, and with transcendent power, the secrets of the spirit land; or as he was in his ascension at the right hand of God. He determined not to know Christ efflorescent, victorious, attractive, beautiful, winning. He determined not to know even Jesus Christ, when he came among the Corinthians, except as the wounded, the bruised, the crucified.

When, therefore, Paul came preaching a divine Saviour, how natural it would have been for him to slur over these things which were offensive to his hearers in regard to that Saviour, only making conspicuous such features of Him and of His doctrine as were agreeable to them; but no, he said, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

He determined not to know even the Saviour, except as the crucified One.

He determined to preach among those proud, beauty-

loving, effeminate. sensitive Greeks, the most odious thing that could be preached—namely, a malefactor ; a man so weak that the Roman government could easily lay the cross upon him ; a man whom his own countrymen despised and crucified.

Such was his text, such was his theme ; and he went to this proud city of Corinth, and determined to preach this truth in its most palpable form, and to know nothing but that.

Surely, he might well say that the wisdom of this world was not with him ; that he was not wise according to the pattern of this world ; that he did not depend upon the power of words, or the skillful arrangement of appeals ; that these would not help him under the circumstances.

What was there that helped him ?

He had advanced a new conception of the divine nature, which was foolishness to them who only heard it by the outward ear, while to those who really got it into their mind, and understood what it was, and felt the transcendent beauty of it, and entered into the interior conception of that which represented the constituent elements of the divine nature, it was the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation.

And what was this cross, what was this suffering, what was this broken Saviour, but the revelation of God through Him who thought it was not robbery to be equal with God, and made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and, being found in fashion as a man,

humbled himself, and became obedient unto death—the death of the cross?

Of all the writers whose words are recorded in the Bible, there was no one whose spirit so perfectly accorded, on the whole, with the modern spirit, and the spirit which prevails in America, as Paul's.

There was no one who had such a profound sense of individualism, of the right of the individual, or of the object of religion—namely, to build up in each particular person a manhood that should be large, strong, rich, and perfectly free.

There was no one ot them that spoke so much about liberty—a sound, peculiarly pleasant to our ears—as the Apostle Paul; and he declares that we are called to it; that it is the very thing in religion to which we are called. Now, there is an apprehension, very wide-spread—and we can see how reasonably it has sprung up—that religion, so far from making men free, hampers them, restricts them, ties them up, burdens them; and there is among men a universal impression, when life is strong in young veins, and the impulse to do just as they wish to is powerful, that they do not want to be religious. The fact is that they want to enjoy themselves a little while.

"I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."—Rom. vii., 25, and viii., 1.

In this memorable passage of experience, there is the

recognition that men are both sinful and imperfect.

They are constitutionally imperfect. Imperfection is the universal necessity. It is the divinely created condition under which humanity comes into this life.

Sinfulness springs in a degree from it, differing simply in this: that when men fail in the best things, or fail to live according to the laws prescribed for them, through ignorance, or through immature power, that is *imperfection;* but when they have the power to conform to any rule of conduct, and deliberately violate that rule, it is *sinfulness*.

The difference between imperfection and sinfulness is not that one is a violation of law and the other is not, but that one is a violation of law from weakness, and the other is a violation of law intentionally, or with purpose —at any rate, with one's own permission.

It is taught in these memorable chapters of Romans, that in those who seek to live right there is a prolonged and painful struggle. Especially was this true under the twilight dispensation of the Jews.

The struggle was mainly between men and matter—between the spirit and the flesh. If we were to drop Paul's nomenclature and adopt the most modern, we should at once say that the struggle was between the bodily appetites and inclinations and the higher sentiments—the reasoning faculties, the moral sense, the perception of that which is fit and beautiful.

It was taught that knowledge and conscience only made matters worse.

Paul gives an account, doubtless, of his own internal experience; and, without making it exclusively personal,



SAUL'S CONVERSION.
From the Painting by Gustave Dore

he does not, on the other hand, avowedly make it general. In the seventh of Romans he describes the condition of a noble nature, a man of high character, seeking to reach nobility, baffled and brought into a state of painful self-condemnation by the fact that he reached a point short of his own ideal.

He was held up by a ritual law whose drift, whose tendency was meant to be spiritual; and to cultivate the higher instincts and sentiments of his nature, but the actual operation of which was not such.

It rather tended to cultivate in him a sense of right just acute enough to bring him into a state of self-condemnation—for it is true that the more we rise into a sense of integrity the more rigorous our idea of integrity becomes.

The more men love truth the more sharp is the requisition which they lay upon themselves in the matter of veracity. Honor begets a higher sentiment of honor. Goodness rises its own standard.

So, in the particular experience which I read to you in the seventh of Romans, Paul says that the coming in of moral measurement, the introduction of the law, instead of making him better, made him worse; that is, it revealed to him how bad he was, how weak, how imperfect, and how sinful. Before the commandment came he felt that he was all right enough; but when the commandment came he felt that he was all wrong.

A dozen rough miners go into a camp out in California, and they grow regularly coarser and coarser. They are at home as if they were in a pig-stye. Now, the introduction of a woman produces a revolution

among them. The sister or the wife of one of them goes out, bearing her refinement; and in one single day every man is convicted of his coarseness and vulgarity, and wants to "wash and fix up"; and is to-day uneasy in that in which yesterday he was at perfect ease; he is convicted of his essential lowness.

Where there is no ideal standard and no exemplar, men gradually deteriorate, and become contented with their low condition; but if you bring in a higher standard it incites thought and motive to higher character; and, recognizing this standard, they become discontented, and seek to rise to a higher level.

Finally, Paul declares that relief came to him from Jesus Christ. He gives a most affecting description of the moral struggles which he went through, and which more or less epitomize what every right-minded man has felt in himself—the general wish to do right, and the continual failure in that particular. The general wish and will was present with him, but how to perform he knew not.

Let any man rise in the morning, and say. "Now, to-day I wish to be considerate to others;" he is doing well to wish and to say it, but how to perform he does not know; for, when the sun goes down, he is satisfied that he has acted harshly and hardly, here and there, and everywhere.

Set any standard higher than that which prevails in the average of society for yourself, and you will, perhaps, in your better moments, with your conscience and your higher nature, conform to it; but when you go into the

practical jarring of life you will in conduct perpetually fall below it.

Now, at that point, you have the consciousness and the testimony of reason and the moral sense that you *mean* the best things; but you have the testimony of experience that you do not *do* the best things; and it is just where these two things come together like saw-teeth that men are gashed with pain and suffering—and that in the proportion in which they are morally sensitive. It was just at this point that Paul was when he said:

"I find a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. [I meant to be benevolent all day to-day, but I have been proud and selfish. I meant to be kind and gentle. I meant that my temper should not get dominion over me; but it has flashed out here and there all the time. This law is imperative in me; it acts every day.] I delight in the law of God, after the inward man [in my thoughts, in my calm moments, in my reflective hours. I rejoice in everything that is manly, and pure, and generous, and just; I have inward testimony of that; it is a fact as clear as any other; and it is no less clear that when I go out into the battle of life I come short perpetually in my conduct]; but then I see another law [I am under two laws], in my members, warring against this law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

After Paul had wrought more than forty years, and when he had come to the position in which he was to be delivered only by the executioner, in the very last letter,

I think, that he ever wrote, in a Roman prison and waiting for his release and his crown, he said:

"Not as though I had already attained, either, were already perfect; but I follow after [I keep at it], if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Oh, poor Paul! If he had lived in our day, we could have sent to him folks who would have shown him how he might be perfect. But as it was, he was conscious of the inharmony which existed between the mind and the flesh—between himself and the world. His ideal of what it was to be a perfect man in Christ Jesus had grown so much faster than the realization of such attainment, that when, at the very end of his career, he looked upon himself, he was further from having realized manhood than at the beginning—and that, I take it, is the experience of every large-minded and intelligent Christian.

So, when the apostle to the Gentiles went forth preaching the great substantial truths of Christ, you will discern very clearly that when he preached to the Jews he adapted himself to them, through figures, through language, through illustrations, through manners and customs which they understood; but when he went to Athens he conformed his mode of address to the intellectual habits and perceptions of the Greeks.

"Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, and

where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation."—Rom. xv. 20.

The converse is this:

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon."

You will remember when Paul was converted he stood very high among his own people as a man eminent both in knowledge and in executive talent. He evidently took the lead in putting down a pestilent heresy that his countrymen thought had sprung up among them; and he pursued the methods which have been very widely pursued since the world began in putting down heresies—that is differences of belief. Instead of using argument, he tried the sword, prisons, stones, anything that would make an impression; and it was when he was on one of his errands of convincing the world that Christianity was not true, that he was himself stricken down mid-way, and brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. His whole career before and his whole life development afterward show us that one very strong element—the axis, as we might almost call it, of Paul's character—was his pride.

He was a man of great firmness, with a temperament of the utmost fervor, and with fervent affections, which had been held in check up to this time.

One would suppose that a man of such a nature, being converted, would have turned upon his heel, and gone to Jerusalem, and put himself at the head of the Christian movement. He was a bold man, fearing nothing, and apparently all the opportunities for a man of his

executive energy would open in the neighborhood of the mother church, or the mother assemblies, in Jerusalem.

But instead of going there, after spending some days in Damascus, and preaching in that place until the Jews of Damascus, enraged at his apostasy, as they would call it, attempted his life, he secretly went to Arabia, returning thence to Damascus. How soon he returned we do not know, but he spent the first three years of his ministry somewhere in Syria and Arabia.

Of these first three years we have absolutely no account. He gives a simple statement of the time in the first of Galatians.

Then he went to Jerusalem ; but he stayed there only a fortnight, and saw none of the apostles except James, who seems to have been the chief. After that he departed and went into Asia Minor.

For fourteen years he labored without going back to Jerusalem at all. Afterward, when he went back, it was for a very brief stay ; and he declares that he preached the Gospel in places where nobody had been before him, seeking them out of preference.

He was not after a settlement. He was not in search of a parish or a good salary. He was not trying to find rich synagogues of Jews who were ready to be converted. He went nowhere in the footprints of men who had gone first and taken the brunt of opposition and persecution. He went to the Gentile world. He was proud to go where foundations had not been laid, and to lay foundations that other men might build on them—as they did. This was the Apostle Paul's feeling in regard to his labor;

"I will take foundation-work. Let other men have the building upon that."

What, then, did Paul say that he did?

"Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation."

He does not boast. It is simply an implication. "I went into Arabia," he says; "I labored three years where there was no apostle. I merely looked in at Jerusalem. I took my way northward into Asia Minor. I worked along the Uxine Sea, all through that mountainous and unsearched region where there had been no predecessor. There I was the first to preach, and there I took the brunt of opposition, or of indifference, which is worse than opposition. I not only took it, but I chose it. I strove for it."

Yea, clear around to Illyricum—that is, the western part of Austria—he preached. He preached in Achaia, in Greece, in Macedonia, in all those colonies on the north, clear up to Austria, as it is now, and down to Italy and Rome. In all that country he says that he was the pioneer, taking the first and hardest work.

Says he: "I strove to do it. I would not let anybody get ahead of me. It was my ambition, and I did it that I might not build where anybody else had built, but that I might lay foundations on which others should build."

What were the motives that actuated him? That is a very important question. In the first place, here is what you may call Christian pride.

Paul never for a moment forgot that he had been a

persecutor; but he declared that he was not one whit behind the chiefest of the apostles.

When men undertook to invalidate his teachings, and said to him, "You are only a bastard apostle, you did not belong to the original twelve," he rose up and asserted his apostolicity, and said, "The Gospel I did not receive of men. It was not James that told me of this Gospel, nor Peter. Of God I received it"—alluding to his conversion on the road to Damascus. He vindicated his equality with the apostolic band—not for the sake of praise and glory, but because he would not have his message discredited. Not for his own sake, but for the sake of the message, he declared that he was fully the equal of any of the apostles. His temperament was such as would make him feel quite as much as he was.

So he says: "I am not behind any man. I am a match for anybody. I am a full-grown man. I am a Jew."

When a man wants to praise himself excessively, he tells what country he came from. An Englishman says, "I am an *Englishman*." "Thank God," says his neighbor over the channel, "I am a real full-blooded *Frenchman*." We say, wagging our heads at cathedrals, and palaces, and towers, "Thank God, I am an *American*." And we say, or shall, on the approaching 22nd, "Thank God, we are *Yankees*."

So every man mentions his nationality as though that conveyed the highest conception of manhood. And so Paul said, "I am a Jew." He felt the dignity of being a Jew—and he had a right to; for there is no nobler stock, and there never was a grander mission, than that

which God gave to the Jew. We that revile the Jews are dividing among ourselves the ideas and legacies which were wrought out by their prophets and teachers; and Paul had a right to say, standing as he did midst ancient civilization, "I am a Jew, and I am not a whit beneath any of the apostles."

What, then, is it becoming in a man to do? He ought to do work that nobody else can do as well as he. A man ought to say, "It is my place to do the things that are the hardest, and that men take to the least naturally, and are the most inclined to shirk. My business is to work where nobody else will work."

Such should be the spirit of him who feels himself to be a man. It is quite in keeping with the spirit which our Master urged when he said, "He that would be chief, let him be a servant; he that would be greatest must be content to be among the least."

Thousands and thousands of men are looking about for places. Thousands and thousands of men want something to do. Oh! that the spirit of Paul were among young scholars, young preachers, young operatives. Then they would say, not, "Who will show me a good parish?" not, "Who will show me a remunerative place?" not, "Who will show me where honor is to be obtained?" not, "Who will put me, the Lord's candle, in a golden candlestick?" but, "Where is there a place that needs some one to fill it, and that other men do not want to go to? That is the place for me, because I am a man, and a *Christian* man."

Such is the ideal of pride. It is not saying, "Bring honor to me; bring to me praise; bring to me the fat of

the land; bring to me all delicacies; I am the great man whom all things are to serve." That is infidel pride. That is devilish pride.

But if pride says: "I am wise, and I ought to go to the ignorant, because the darkest place needs the greatest light; I am strong, and ought to do the hardest things, because the weakest folks can do the least; I am refined, and ought to go where there is a lack of refinement, because rudeness needs the most refining," then it is true pride.

If a man says, "By as much as I am better than other people I ought to serve them," then he is proud in the right direction. People preach against pride. They do not see that they should put pride to such service as this. It is very easy for me to denounce pride in this pulpit; it is very easy for me to stand here and talk about the dangers of pride; but I tell you, the way to deal with pride is to set it to work.

Thousands of men have been destroyed for want of pride, where one has been destroyed by excessive pride. Pride is a glorious thing, provided it is disciplined, and employed according to the canon of Christ, and not according to the tendency of wild nature.

Then Paul had a feeling that he never got over, thank God, to the end of his life, proud as he was with Christian pride. He always carried with him one wound which would not heal. "I persecuted the church," he said. He never could get it out of his mind that he, "the least of the apostles" "persecuted the Church of God."

You will say that it was a sentimental thing. It was

sentimental. He did not look at it the way of the world. Most persons would have said, "Paul, don't feel so bad about this matter; you went according to the ideas of your age; you followed your natural instincts; you made a mistake, to be sure; but all you had to do was to turn on yonr heel, when you saw your mistake, and quit it." That, however, did not satisfy him.

Oh, to have persecuted Jesus! The more he thought of it, the worse he felt. The more he knew of Christ, the more he understood his relations to the world and his love to the dying creatures of his kind, the more awful it seemed that he ever lifted his hand against the Saviour, and that he ever put to death one that believed on him. It was a perpetual sorrow to him. He knew that it did not stand against him; but he was a man of such a generous nature that he never could forget it; and he, as it were, put upon himself tasks which no other man would take by way of making amends for that wrong which he had committed.

He said: "It is fit that I, who smote the infant church, should go among those who never knew Christ, and bear the brunt of advancing his kingdom all over the world."

That is the kind of penance which one may well glory in. The humility of his fall was as magnificent as his pride.

Then there was his feeling of love to Christ—for wherever he was, the main conception of Paul's life was heroic, enthusiastic, and, if you please, fanatical love of the Lord Jesus Christ. It filled his whole soul. It was the fountain which could not be restrained, but which

gushed out in every direct and indirect way. And he felt, "There is nothing that love cannot do."

Is there anything that love cannot do? Oh, how many times, when their boys were suffering of fever in the hospital, or of wounds in the battle-field, did mothers, feeble, and with scanty means, go on foot, threading their way through state after state, through the wilderness, through cold, through the heat, through hunger and through thirst, to find out those boys! And all the way they counted not their own suffering anything.

By day and by night, wherever they were, and under all circumstances, they were supported by the thought, "All this I do for the love that I bear for that boy." And love would do an hundred times more if it were necessary. It has no language, and therefore it seeks by service to heap up some outward sign or token of what it is, and what it would do. The deeper the love, the more it glories in some form of expression that implies sacrifice, endurance, suffering.

"God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

These are magnificent, ultimate presentations of that which we see all about us. How love is crippled by language! How small it feels itself to appear in comparison with its intent! How poor it is for this world's use! How it seeks, therefore, some mode of making itself known!

And to Paul it was not enough to sing, or pray, or praise. "O," he said, "that I might do something to signify how I love him that loved me! What am I that

Jesus did not make me? What is there noble in me that is not of him? Every worthy thought or feeling that I have is inspired by him! It is not to man's praise that I am what I am, but to the glory of Him that, loving me, redeemed me with his precious love."

And so Paul said: "Give me the hardest work; for the hardest work will show the greatest love." When he had wrought everywhere, through all wildernesses, and all foreign cities—in the midst of perils of false brethren and riotous heathen mobs, on the sea and on the land, clear down to the end, and lay in the prison at Rome, chained to a soldier, he said, "Let no man henceforth disturb me." When he was a prisoner, waiting his summons, he had this one feeling:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me."

It was Christ that occupied his mind to the last.

Besides that, there was one other thing. As out of the love of Christ comes the love of men, so Paul felt that in doing foundation work he was making a contribution to the happiness of his kind. This he intimates in the first of Corinthians, the third chapter, and the tenth verse:

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon."

Everywhere he repeatedly speaks of sowing and not reaping, that others may reap what he has sown. He

changes the figure from the agricultural to the architectural one.

This conception, that he was making the way easier for somebody else ; that he was bearing pain that others might not have pain to bear ; that he was going through personal suffering—hunger and thirst and sickness—that others might come, and in peace and comfort occupy fields which had been laid open to them—that it was that marked the truest element in the character of this true man.

I see that Renan and others undervalue Paul. I hear him scoffed at, or spoken disparagingly of, in one way or another ; but to my mind there never lived upon the earth more than two or three men.

One was Moses, and one was Paul.

Perhaps there have been one or two more ; but two at least, of the four or five great natures of the world, have been Jews. Men of such magnificent zeal, of such glorious self-sacrifice, and of such long-continued service (thirty-one years there were of his ministry)—such men do not come in every age ; and when they do come in any age there are very few that know how to appreciate them. Paul stood head and shoulders above every other man. There never has been a greater than he. He lived and died for the love of Christ, and for the love of mankind.

Here to-day, Paul, that noblest of gentlemen that ever lived, who touched the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of every conceivable delicacy of feeling and courtesy of affection that was inspired by the love of Christ, walks and speaks. Here is a retiring place for sorrow that would weep unseen. Here are the

tonics for weakness. Here are the glasses through which faith may look and discern invisible things.

Ye mourners, ye desolate, ye orphans, ye oppressed, ye men broken in hope, ye bankrupts, too old to begin again, yet misrepresented and persecuted and afflicted, ye great army of suffering humanity, if ye have forgotten the word of God, and turned aside into the desert and arid ways of this world, come back to your father's God. Come back to the Book in which you were instructed when you were children. And forget not from whom you received those things. Your fathers—where are they? Is your life leading you to join them in the company of the just made perfect?

I present this Book to you, not because I am a minister, but because I am a man. I present it to you not by the force of any ingenious plea, but because I have known human life. When the waves have been huge, and the night has been dark, there has been a Jesus revealed here to me, walking in the night on the sea, and giving calm amid the thunder of the waves and the roar of the tempest.

Are there those who have suffered the exquisite pangs of mortification? There is balm for them. Are there those who, with unutterable anguish, have overhung their children dying? There is comfort for such. Are there those whose heaven has been black, and whose hope has departed, and who have thought themselves doomed to destruction? I tell you, there is a daylight even for such.

I bring to you this Book that has been my counsellor, my comfort, and my food. It is nnspeakably dear to me,

from all the associations of my life. I rejoice in it because my father walked through it, as his father walked through it, and men walked through it to remote generations. It is a precious Book, not because poems say so, but because my soul says so ; and I could present you no better gift for the holidays than this Book, with a spirit to live in the innermost recesses of your heart, not in bondage to the letter, not in fear of the text, but in sympathy with the teaching, and to make it the man of your counsel, your guide, a lamp shedding light upon your path. Thus let it become a most precious blessing to the head and heart of every one of you.

Will you not go home to-night and look up your old Bible? Oh, is there a novel which comes out that has such novelty as the Bible would have to some of you if you were to read it? Will you not go home and open it? You may find inscribed in it your own name, or your father's, or your mothor's. Perhaps you will find that it has been read more in some places than in others. Will you not look along the edge and see where it has been thumbed and turned, and where it was, that those who gave you this precious legacy dwelt most frequently? Their feet beat paths, as it were, along the recesses of the Word of God. Will you not look at the marks made by your own hand, and remember when you made them? Will you not revive somethiug of your own life by restoring to its place and to its honored functions this long-neglected Word of God? For your own sake, and, if you are parents, for the sake of your children, and for Christ's sake, be ye rich in the Word of God.

The righteousness that the apostle Paul gloried in and



THE PRODIGAL SON—THE REVEL.—From the Painting by Dubofc.

sought is a righteousness of truth, of justice, of benevolence, of personal purity, of infinite kindness, of lenity, of meekness, of humility, of superior manhood—which he had, for he was one of the noblest men that ever trod the path of heroes, which is a path of thorns.

How came Paul by that righteousness which he had? He says, "I came by it through the sight of Jesus—that is, the inward sight, which was revealed by the Spirit to me. My own righteousness was as filthy rags—that which before I thought of and prided myself on."

Hear, how he speaks of it: "I had everything to be proud of. I came from the best nation."

The best nation on earth to you is the one in which you were born. So Paul boasts of being of the stock of Israel. He also boasts of being of the tribe of Benjamin. Every man thinks that the town where he was born is the best town; and so Paul thought the tribe to which he belonged was the best tribe. He boasts of being a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was circumcised the eighth day. He was of the stock of Israel and of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

And Paul says: "As touching the law, I was a Pharisee." But he was not a tame sort of Pharisee—no, no, he was a man intensely in earnest. He says, "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church." I believed that I was doing right, I believed that other people ought to do the same thing that I did, and I was not only willing to be what I was, but I was willing to compel other people to be it too.'

He goes on to say: "Touching the righteousness which was in the law, I was blameless." As regards the

changing of garments, I was correct. I knew how to cleanse myself after touching a dead body. As to the wearing of phylacteries and dresses I was without fault. Respecting all these external peculiarities I was perfect. "But," he says, "after I had seen Christ, after I had come to a sense of what a noble character was, after there had come down to me out of Heaven this picture of a true manhood, when I once saw that, oh! what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

The transition may be very sudden between intense admiration and utter contempt. A man out West opens a ledge, and finds what he thinks to be gold ore. Oh, how pleased he is! He digs out two or three bags full of it, and then covers it all up. He will not tell one of his neighbors. He immediately starts with these specimens for New York, all the while keeping his secret to himself. When he gets to the city he puts up at a hotel, and takes a handful of the ore and goes to the assayer. He thinks himself as rich as Crœsus; but the assayer, as soon as he sees it, laughs at him, and says, "It is iron pyrites; there isn't a speck of gold in it." The man goes back to the hotel chopfallen and provoked, saying, "I have paid my fare, and the freight on this miserable stuff, all the way from the West for nothing!" In the morning there is no value that could be put upon that supposed treasure, and at night it is mere dirt!

Now, here is Paul. He had been seeking for the ideal of manhood. He had sought it in mean ways, thinking that because he kept time with the clock, because he observed the ritual services here and there and everywhere, he was growing in manhood. But sudenly

there came to him a benign representation of manhood as embracing love and self-sacrifice and holiness; he saw the Greatest making himself the least; he beheld the glory of God in Christ Jesus; he felt the breath of God, which is the breath of ages, working and moulding and raising all things; he saw God represented as one who was a universal Nurse, giving himself for others; and seeing this exemplification of truth and purity and heroism set forth as a pattern of manhood, he says, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

In other words, the consciousness that he was being changed into these noble moods and dispositions which are in God lifted him above and carried him beyond those things which he had been in the habit of regarding as all-important.

But consider: Is Paul quite sure of himself? Paul was a large man. Few other men have appeared so far above the horizon. We are not yet ourselves large enough to take in the full measure of this man—for in my judgment theologians in times past have very largely occupied themselves with those elements in Paul's writings which were clearly secondary; and for very obvious reasons they have neglected those which were the profoundest, and which could be interpreted only by men

who had gone into substantial experiences of the same kind. Therefore, largely, theology has been made out of the washings of gold that were in the mountains; and they have been the smallest part; whereas the treasure lay yet mountainously abundant, but deep and shut up in the rock.

We are not to understand *contentment* in the sense of supineness or corpulent indolence. Paul was not a fat man, sure. He was a black-haired man, with a bilious-nervous temperament. He was a man of intense feeling, but of that intensity of feeling that does not stop. There is much intensity of feeling in the world that comes by gusts, and the very feeling necessitates a reaction, a lull, or a change; but Paul was one of those men who were tenacious of feeling, and went on and on and on with it. There were certain great elements in his nature that remind me of the old German story of an Eolian harp made by stretching iron wires between two great towers on the castle of a certain Count. Whenever the wind arose these wires began to sound; and as the wind waxed they sounded louder and louder; and when the storm and tempest came they roared out their strains of music; but it was always just those wires—no more and no others—giving precisely the same tones which rolled through the air.

There were two, or three, or four, great strings in the mind of this apostle; and when the wind blew they sounded; and they went on sounding, and sounding, and sounding; and he seems to have no art about it but that which is employed in creating the beauty of holiness—no historic curiosity; no sense of literary criticism; noth-

ing Hellenic. He was sensitive to all that pertained to man's essential moral nature. In that he was a universal genius. And as to his being contented in any such sense as that of quiescence, the whole of his life, his passage from city to city, his unwearied labors, his sufferings, the things which he recounts of himself,—all these show that he was not content in any such way as not to be enterprising.

"I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again [there seems to have been some interruption of it]; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity."

Paul was also a gentleman. He always took the best view of things. He always conceded the highest motives. He is a mean man that is constantly thinking that other people act meanly. He goes on to say:

"Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content [I am willing to bear all that is put upon me for the sake of the thing that I am living for]. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound [I know how, that is, to be without a cent, and I know how to have my pocket full]."

Now, there are a great many men who can do either of them; but there are very few who can do both. Men there are who have learned how to be poor; they have accommodated themselves to poverty, being satisfied that that was to be their state; and there are other men who are going to be rich, and who say, "I am destined to that, and I must therefore form my character and religious feeling on that supposition, I must be a good man and

live rightly, though I am rich;" but to know how to swing and tick both ways—rich, poor—rich, poor—rich, poor; to be a man with both ticks, that is not so easy.

Now, Paul says that he had learned that. I never heard of any school teaching such things as that. Why, Paul's doctrine of inspiration is enough to call out forty synods any time, for expounding and discussion; but here is a question that goes deeper than any question of that kind—How can a man live so that whatever place he may be in he is a full man, happy, courageous and strong?

"I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; *everywhere*, and in *all things*, I am instructed [drilled, disciplined] both how to be full and how to be hungry, and both how to abound and suffer need. I can do *all things* [brave words, these, until you put on the rest] through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Yes, Paul! with such love as thine, and such communion as thine, the strength of Christ did enable thee to do all things, to suffer all things—to enjoy without harm, to suffer without damage, and to be, in fullness or in emptiness, in exaltation or in prison, as grand a man as ever walked the crooked surface of the globe.

"But if any man say unto you. This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it and for conscience sake; for the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?"—1 Cor. x., 28, 29.

I do not believe that there is another book in creation which ever inculcates the duty of courtesy of conscience, or politeness of conscience. We have learned, in social

life, in regard to ordinary affairs, not that we are to stand for ourselves, but that we are to have respect for the feelings of others. The child is taught to give up the best chair, although he has got it, and although, for that matter, he has a right to it, and it is his. We train children thus to yield their rights for the sake of others.

Speech is free in this country; but we train men to courtesy, and to silence as a part of courtesy. We have certain rights of property, and in great matters we stand upon them; but in a thousand things we teach men to waive their rights in this respect for the sake of some contribution to the general stock of happiness, because that is the way to get along in life.

There is, however, one thing which men have always been taught to stand for perpendicularly, without slips or gradations; and that is conscience. Conscience, we are told, is a thing which must not be bartered, nor sold, nor compromised, nor in any way treated, except in a most up and down manner. Conscience! Oh, conscience!—that must be maintained at all hazards.

Paul, therefore, is the boldest man in literature, because he says that you must respect another man's conscience. No matter if you think he is wrong, you must do so.

"But," you say, "my conscience tells me that it is the other way." That has nothing to do with it; his conscience tells him that way; and, no matter what your conscience tells you, you are to respect what his tells him. Be courteous in this as in other things.

"Be ye, therefore, followers of God as dear children;

and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and has given himself for us."

Out of this fundamental and vital quality there will spring up many other forms of inspiration; but the root-form, the foundation, the fundamental element, of Christian life, is to lie in that love to God which dear children have to a parent, and which Jesus Christ made manifest by his walk and conversation.

We have heard much clamor and much dispute as to what are fundamental doctrines. There are doctrines fundamental to philosophical systems. Arminianism has certain vital doctrines; it cannot be Arminian without them.

The Manichean heresy had vital points which were essential to it. The Calvinistic scheme has its vital points without which it cannot be Calvinistic. There may be such things as vital or fundamental doctrines in reference to the human heart or to a Christian life. The requisition for a life of Christianity, is, *Walk in love.* That is the fundamental element. Out of that other things shall come. Without that, come what may, it is all void and vain.

How long shall we need to go without an adequate interpretation of the 13th of Corinthians, where Paul, with every form of speech which belongs to eloquence, declared that men might know all, believe all, do all, practice every external charity, but unless they had love it should profit them nothing, but should be as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." With this glorious descant hanging in the air, hundreds and thousands of years have rolled away in the war of the world, men quarrelling, and

shedding each other's blood, and burning each other at the stake, on account of doctrines that had nothing to do with love, and of which a man might believe either way without being better or worse.

Here is the great quality out of which is going to spring whatever else is of vital use—namely, walking with God in that spirit in which Christ walked with us. We are to walk as dear children, trusting, loving, confiding; but out of that spirit, when once it is radicated, and kept vital in use, will come many other experiences. For one may follow God with the reason, the intellect; but, without that spirit, no reason, no intellect, can interpret God. We can learn by the reason; but we may learn much, and that much may not help us.

The ministry of such men, being neither mechanical nor perfunctory, but spontaneous and continual, and in full liberty and joy, is one of the most blessed avocations that the world knows; and activity, enterprise, incessant preaching or incessant visiting—these things are not to be set down to credit as virtues. They are gains.

Now, Paul had them; and he had them, too, under circumstances in which they were not all externally pleaant. I read a passage in your hearing, this morning, to show you that, notwithstanding the extraordinary incidents which befell his active ministry, it was joyful. I read it to show that the central idea of a Christian ministry in his hands was joy; and that all those superlative experiences, which he had, but which were rarely ever experienced in the ministry of any other man, were converted into joys by the shining light of the interior central joys of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what to him

were perils, or false brethren, or enemies, in the city or in the country, on the sea or on the land, but occasions for thanksgiving? For, as there are some ships that go plunging, plunging through the seas, so that every single wave splits and throws over, and their decks are never dry, while there are others that ride the waves, and are lifted by whatever strikes them, so there are some men who jam themselves into every wave, and are forever full of tears, while others, with a high Christian ideal, are buoyant in the midst of troubles, and ride over them, floating on the storm, and rejoicing.

Paul was one of the latter. He was the healthiest, the sweetest-souled, the most heroic, of all the men that are mentioned in the history of the Old or the New Testament. Now he was in prison; now he had no longer liberty to go where he would. The cries of the churches were brought over to him; but he was a man enchained, fastened to a soldier. He heard of their disagreements and conflicts, or of their welfare and rejoicings. He received tokens sent in to him of their good will and various experience.

But it was when he was lying, ready to be offered, and conscious that his last hours were near to him—it was then, and as a part of his own experience, that he said to them, "Having done all that lies in activity and enterprise and forth-putting, why, do the rest, that consists in standing and waiting."

It did not belong to the literary habits of antiquity to write such analytic memoirs explanatory of a man's education, or of his thought about himself in history, as has taken place in modern times.

Among the best books that we have in these latter days are either those which are a competent account, by such men as Goethe, of themselves, and of the development of their mind and genius, or works made up from the writings of men that have disclosed the progress of development in their character and in their history. I say these are among the best, because the building of a man is the noblest work of time; and if it be worth our while to know how architects build, and by what principles; if it be a matter of more than curiosity to know how Titian put on his colors, or how Michael Angelo wrought, whether in stone or in pigment, how more is it a matter, not only of curiosity, but, indeed, of that which lies far beyond all curiosity—namely, personal importance—to know how men are made, what are the stages of their development, and especially in the case of those whose breadth and fruitfulness of life have rendered the race indebted to them.

Now, if we could have had an itinerary, a journal, of John, of Paul, or, above all, of Jesus, how rich does our imagination teach us we should have been! I cannot but mourn the unfruitfulness of Christ's written life.

That his life was enormously fruitful, we have the evidence of his own followers.

John tells us that if all Christ said and did should be put into books, the world could not contain them. We are not disposed to call John to an exact account for this statement. It simply implies a large number; it is an extravagance for a definite number; but it indicates, as we know from other sources, that a large part of the career of Christ, unwatched, or unsought by the memory,

was transient, and that we have, therefore, only specimens of it. If we could have had his analysis of men, his thought of society, his view of the maxims, prudential and other, that had grown up in the world; if we could have had his notion of armies, and of great cities, and of their municipal policies; if we could have had his secret thoughts upon all the developments of human life, as we have had them in respect to the soul of the individual man—how large an inheritance would the world have had that has perished from it! I do not discuss the reasons—which are many, and perhaps satisfying, to the intellect, if not to curiosity—why it should be so.

Paul was, in one respect, the most satisfying of all the men who had to do with the primitive establishment of truth.

Moses gave us but little of his life, though he gave us a little. Samuel gave us less of his. David wrote his *intense* life, and but very little else. As it were, only when under such stress of feeling that he could not repress himself, did he sing; and we have that record of the heart. The prophets, such as Isaiah, gave us something, and yet but very little.

It is not until we come down to Paul that we find this gracious selfness, which is spread through all his epistles; and he alone, of all the sacred writers, gave us an account of the principle or procedure of his ministerial life.

Corinth, perhaps the most luxurious, the most voluptuous city of antiquity visited by Paul, became the seat of an early church, and was rich in receiving two letters from him. These letters—especially the first one—contain no inconsiderable amount of light on the theory, if

I may say so, of his practice; and it is from this first letter that I have selected the two passages which give us the key-note of his preaching on the atonement. He preached the atonement never as a doctrine; he preached it as a biographical living personality.

"I determined, when I came among you," he says to them, "not to know any synagogue; not to know the Talmud, nor any other commentary; not to know any sacrifice, nor any ordinance, nor any history of God's people, nor any philosophy, as the secret and source of that power which I wanted, and meant to have, in my ministration among you. I determined not to preach with art, with accomplishment, with curious cunning, penning up men by ingenuities of words. I determined to resort to no sophist word; to no flowery figures of rhetoric, sounding sweet in the air, and robbing the soul of meaning; to no shrewd theories of Greek philosophy (though Paul was brought up in a school that was pervaded with the Greek spirit). None of these things did I rely upon. I might have been a sweet singer as a poet; I might have been a bold speaker as a prophet; I might have been a soothsayer; but I had in my mind a source of inspiration and power which was transcendently higher than these; and I determined not to sacrifice, nor to run the risk of sacrificing, that power, by any of these meretricious or secular ministrations. I determined to know Christ, and *Him crucified.*"

The peculiarity is not that he determined not to speak on any subjects except those which immediately related to Christ. That was not the topic before him. In those old days of trial through which we went, men did not

want us to preach about slavery and its abominations, and this text was held before us, to pen us up. We were told that we must preach nothing but the emenities of the gospel.

Paul had said that he was determined not to know anything but Christ ; and so they preached Christ in such a manner that nobody could dream what Christ was. Therefore, Christ was preached so as to be devoid of the Spirit and of power. Not the Christ that came to open prison doors, and break chains, and give light to the blind, and voice to the dumb, but the doctrinal Christ, was the one that was to be preached. Such was the charter of that illicit, ignominious method ; whereas this passage has no such meaning.

Paul did not say that he was going to preach nothing but Christ, and Him crucified. That is denied in this same book. He spoke of incest, adulteries, all manner of traffic, and every phase of social, political and economic conduct between man and man. His first letter to the Corinthians is full of these things,—showing that no such narrow, meagre, poor interpretation could properly be put upon this declaration.

What he meant was : "I determined not to know anything as a source and secret of power save Christ, and Him crucified. I did not mean that you should go away from my discourse saying, 'What a wise man Paul is!' I did not mean that you should go away from me, saying, 'Was there ever a sweeter speaker in this world?' I meant to carry on the discussion of every topic among you so that, when you went away, the dominant and

pervading feeling should be, 'How near we have been to God! What a view of God we have had!'"

What a view? Yes; because he does not say, "I was determined not to know among you anything but Christ"—all that by itself is lame and halt; he said, "I determined not to know anything among you but Christ, and *Him crucified.*" The crucified Christ was what he was determined to preach. "The cross," he says, in the first passage that I read. The cross was that on which he insisted.

"Christ sent me not to baptize."

Not that he wished to stigmatize baptism; but there was something lordlier than that.

"Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."

Remember the time when he spoke this. The cross was then regarded differently from what it is now. You wear magnificent jeweled crosses. I was looking at some crosses yesterday at Tiffany's. Some I could have bought for fifty dollars. For some, with fine cameos, and some with pearls on the top and diamonds on the bottom, I should have been obliged to pay large amounts. There were crosses there that I could have bought for one dollar, and ten dollars, and fifty dollars; and there were some that I suppose I should have had to pay fifteen hundred or two thousand dollars for.

Then there are crosses on the tops of churches, and there is gilt on them—they are covered with gold; but Christ's cross had not a bit of gold on it. There is a jeweled cross at every beauty's bosom. Everywhere, the

world over, it is "The cross, the cross, the cross," until the very name has superseded the name of Christ. Ministers preach about the cross as if it meant Jehovah.

Therefore, when Paul says, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified;" when he says, "I am not to preach with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect,"—you cannot understand that thing at all; for the cross in Christ's day was a dirty thing; it was a nasty thing. On the cross hung the ignominious criminals of the world. The cross was but another name for all that was degrading, and all that men despised; because justice—offended justice—put men to the rack and to shame upon it. It marked ignominy, and ill-desert. It was the hangman's sign, It was worse than the gibbet and the rope; for it not only was atrocious in its cruelty, but it indicated the popular idea of the desert of the criminal that hung upon it. And when the Lord Jesus Christ was put upon the cross, He was put at the very lowest point of human esteem. There was nothing below that. It was at the bottom of all thought of ignominy.

A pretty text Paul had! A great chance had he, going out among the accomplished Greeks—eloquent, elegant men, that had reasoned, for generations, with the highest themes of cosmogony; men that had their heavens full of gods, and had also an esoteric system in which still there was a theology in the proper sense of the term?

Paul, a Jew—an expelled Jew—probably a man of most insignificant, or dwarfed, if not deformed presence

—this Jew, this foreigner, came among the Corinthians, a most accomplished, exquisite, and thoroughly refined people (refined to the point, almost, of effeminacy), saying, "I did not intend to preach to you as your rhetors do, nor did I intend to argue with you as your philosophers do; I did not come with any exterior influence to cheat the eye, and coax the ear, and sweeten the imagination; I came bringing that Jew whose name was Jesus. He was a man esteemed so vile by His own people that the rulers of the people put Him to death. And since they were a subject province, they persuaded the Roman government of His desert, so that the imperial power of Rome was put into their hands wherewith to do it.

So the ruling power of the globe was conjoined to that of His own countrymen to put Him to a death the most disgraceful known in human annals. And this Jew malefactor, crucified—that is what I had to preach to you; and I determined that I would never shrink from, and would never let go, that word *crucified;* that I would never hide in flowers of explanation that stern and cruel thing which lifted Christ between the earth and Heaven; that I would never let Paul be so eloquent that you would forget that his theme was *Christ Jesus*, and Him, not a Prince in glory, and regent, in whose hands were the reins of empire, but *crucified.*"

He tore open the grave, and brought forth the wounded body. The spear marks, the nail marks, the dripping crown marks—all these he held up before them. Was this wise? Was it the way? No; but then, what was the result of it? Was it, or was it not victorious?

Did it, or did it not succeed? Has the world felt the power of it, or has it not? If it has felt it—and who shall deny that it has—then the question comes back with double force: How is it that the world should feel a moral power derived from such a source as that? Are these the themes that are congenial to refinement?

If the apostle had gone into Gaul, among those coarse fibered nations, probably the more cruel and hideous the theme, the more it would have touched the animal nature of such men; but here he was among super-cultured men —men the most advanced in life; and he chose to represent that most odious period in his hero's life, the hour of his weakness and his defeat; the hour of his obloquy and execration; the hour of his death; and he said, "I stand by that;" and he gained a victory over men's reason, their imagination and their affections; and the world has gone up through many degrees by Paul's inspired wisdom in maintaining for his central source of power the cross, and Jesus Christ crucified on it. Now, what was the secret of it: How should that be so? What was there that had such power?

Paul saw the willingness of God to suffer for righteousness in his creation, and he sought to make it known to men. The cross was his theme. The cross means Christ suffering for the world. The cross overthrew the throne. Jupiter sat upon sapphire, or radiant stone, on the summit of Olympus, receiving; but Christ represents God, by the symbol of ignominy, as sitting at the center of the universe, giving—giving himself; giving his thought; giving his administration; giving all the power and all the resources of the universe—for men.

And see how this exactly copies itself with the prominent tendencies of modern thought; for, whatever may be the ultimate theories, however far they may reach in any direction, every one of us knows that, so far as the organized nations of the world are concerned, they begin at the point of savagism and barbarism, and that the advance is from this low condition up.

Now, what power is there that can draw out all the finer elements of human nature? What, that can draw out all the intelligence of men? What, that can draw out the exquisite element of sacrifice and magnaminity? What, that can draw out courage and undying fidelity? What, that can draw out the ten thousand glancing colors of taste, fancy, imagination? What, but some power divine?

The three evangelists that are called synoptic—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—deal very largely in the external experiences and relations of Jesus.

John, distinguishably from all the others, reveals the interior life of Christ. It is remarkable how far from the educated style of thought the whole Bible is. The drift of education, in our day, is from things to ideas and relations.

We are reasoners. We use facts as grapes are used, for the sake of the wine that can be pressed out of them; and, often, as the cluster is destroyed for the sake of the wine, so the facts are macerated for the sake of the conclusions.

At any rate, there is an unquestionable feeling that he who reasons upon causes, he that is able to fix his mind upon abstract ideas, to construct them into a world

of his own, is furthest advanced, and is the greatest. So then, men say, "Ethics are very good, but doctrine is supreme."

Now, with the exception, perhaps, of the apostle Paul, who had received a liberal education, there is almost not a single philosophizing spirit represented in the whole Bible.

THE RICH FOOL.

THIS one gets to be a hoary old man; he is worth twenty millions of dollars; and, if you will listen to him at midnight, it will be as it was with an eminent financier whom I knew, but who has gone now—I do not know where—and who was heard in the night, tossing on his bed, to say:

"Oh God! I wonder when it will be morning."

He could have commanded, the next day, ten millions of dollars; but he was a poor, miserable wreck of humanity, whose clutching hands had become thin like a hawk's, who still had a sense of money, who yet was sagacious, and was looked up to and counseled with in the directory. He was an efficient man, and was called one of our "princes"; but he was a miserable wretch, notwithstanding. He loved nobody, and nobody loved him. He bought all the kindness he received. He knew there were harpy heirs who cursed God that he lived so long. He knew that he must leave his money. The Lord had

put the desert of Sahara in his heart—sand, sand; and not a whit less sand because it was gold sand.

A young man says: "You tell me that a man cannot prosper in this world unless he obeys the great laws of God; now look at that man! He died worth twenty millions of dollars; and he probably has not darkened the door of a church for twenty years. The only time he is known to have gone into a church, he went in feet first; and yet, see how he prospered. Look at his success."

Well, that man succeeded in just the part of himself where he did obey natural laws; and in that part where he violated them, he suffered. He suffered for the want of that element of manhood for the want of which we are lean as sharks. In that part where the heart lies, and that joins a man to his fellows; in that part where affection unites with affection, and makes that undertone of joy, that anthem of life, which flows through all virtuous society—there he stepped out, broke the string and his harp was tuneless. In that direction he had no life. He did not miss it in the activity of business; but it was lost, nevertheless. He did not miss it until he came to make up the inventory of his life; and, even then, he did not know what was wanting. Then he felt the lack.

"Other men," he said, "are happy; why not I? Other men enjoy themselves; why not I?"

Because happiness, joy, was the price you paid for money. You coined your affections, and gave them for gold,—and gold you have got. You should have planted them in heaven, that they might sprout there; but, in-

stead of that you plucked them up by the root. You have been so afraid of generosity that you have grown avaricious. You have been so afraid of wasting benevolence that you have severed every tie that connects you with your fellows. You have succeeded in the lower departments of life, and you are admired as a rich man; but nobody admires you as a *man*. You stand without friends and without friendship. What summer is without birds, without flowers, without fragrance, and without the dews of night, that is a man without good will and the cordial sympathies and affections of his fellow men; and the poorest man that walks the streets of New York or Brooklyn on whom everybody smiles, and to whom little children run and hold up their little hands and sweet faces, is richer than the man who is weighed down with gold, but whom everybody scorns, and whom people point at, saying, "Old hunks! Old hunks!"

THE PRODIGAL SON.

I SHALL speak, this evening, upon the narrative, or principal parts of the narrative, contained in the 15th chapter of Luke's Gospel. It is the parable of the Prodigal Son. I shall pass through the two preliminary parables, and expend the time upon this one.

The passage opens with the gathering of one of those remarkable throngs that assemble to hear the Saviour

wherever He went, and that increased in the latter months of His life until they became so unwieldy as to be positively dangerous.

"Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him."

It is not a mere matter of fine criticism that emphasizes such words as "Then drew near unto Him"; they are words which carry in connection with many other elements the impression which is produced upon the minds of all who study the personal habits of our Saviour. There is abundant evidence that He never stood afar off, as if in merely official relations; that He never made such a separation of Himself from His people as is implied by audience and speaker accorning to ordinary modern usages. He went with the throng. We have little hints to show that when He wrought His miracles they were wrought in the way of affection and personal attention. If a blind man was to be healed, He took him by the hand, and led him out of the town, and then healed him. He would go near to persons, and put His hands upon them, and pronounce the senative benediction.

So, there gathered about Him, wherever He went, those who were attracted by the singular power which He had, and of which sympathy was largely the secret. There gathered about Him a large class of people; and not only did they stand and look afar off, held back by a certain awe; but they came where He was. They came even unbidden into the dining halls. They came into His very presence. They wept upon His feet. They touched Him. They indulged in various familiarities to-

ward Him. And when it is said, "Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him," we are to imagine that He stood in a throng of these worst men—as they were esteemed by the genuine Jews.

The publicans were hated because they were foreign officers. Usually they were Jews ; but what business had a Jew to be collecting taxes from his own people to put into the treasury of imperious, haughty Rome ? He turned against his own kind, and became the instrument of a foreign despot. Aside from any extortion that they might practice, the ignominy of serving an enemy toward whom the Jews cherished the utmost bitterness and hatred rendered the publicans, the tax-gatherers, the most despicable of men to the patriotic feeling of the Jewish nation.

The sinners were men and women of an abandoned character ; men and women that had lost moral restraint, and had gone to the very extreme in vice—the outcasts, the nndone, the wrecks of society. Here was a goodly audience gathered about Him of these publicans and these sinners ; and you may well suppose that the orthodox Jews felt the utmost horror of it.

"The Pharisees and Scribes murmured."

That is, they whispered, muttered. You know that sometimes good men are left to do that when things do not go to satisfy them. There is a great deal of talking behind the back, and a great deal of criticism and whispering going on, about persons who are not, according to their views, sound, and right, and safe. So was it with these men who had spent their whole lives in being good, and were so proud about being good that they had

not got past the body, and had not had time to attend to the inward man, the soul—these men, who were so exceedingly scrupulous, who knew the truth, who had found it out—who knew to a line just what the church was, and just what the church should be; and who had complied with the requirements, who had fulfilled the law, they thought, in every jot and title. If anybody did not know what the flavor piety was they could tell them. They were the favorites of God. They had the law, they had kept the law, and they knew what it consisted in. When they went after our Saviour, and looked upon his methods of teaching, and listened to his discourses, they went as critics; and seeing about Him this great unwashed throng, this great crowd of men, vomited out of the waste places of Jerusalem, or of the Galilean cities, that surrounded Him, they said:

"This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."

Now, they could have got along with Him very well, probably, if He had kept a good distance off, in pontificial robes, and had laid down the law to those wicked men out there; but He made Himself as one of them, and they came close up to Him, and He made them His followers. He received them not simply into His presence, but into His company. They sat at the table with Him; and in that oriental country to eat bread with one was to recognize him as a friend. He not only talked to them, but He ate with them; and that was thought to be as bad as to commune with them at the same table, He belonging to one sect and they to another.

Then it was that our Saviour uttered this exquisite parable of the Prodigal Son; and we will follow the

course of the Prodigal Son, for the sake of bringing out, afterwards, several points that may well occupy our attention.

The point that He makes, and what may be considered as the text, is:

"I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

In another place the same thing is said in another way:

"Likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."

This is the text—divine sympathy with broken down, sinful men, and divine joy in their recuperation—the sympathy of God and the helpfulness of God to all that have sinned and are making even the feeblest strife to regain themselves. God is on the side of every sinner that desires to cease sinning.

"A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country."

It is a striking fact that the first step that was taken amiss and downward (the first impulse probably anteceded this, but the first actual downward step) was the one of no longer desiring to abide under the parental roof. The bonds of affection were slackening. The wish to be his own master was growing in him. A vague and wild curiosity to know what was in the world was stimulating him.

He could not bear the routine of morality in his father's house. He could not endure the restraint of his father's eye and voice. Therefore he determined to take his possessions and go and see the world. There have been thousands since his day who have wrecked and ruined themselves because they wanted to see what was going on among men. So he took his property and went forth from his father's house, and came to a far-off conntry where he could not be sent for nor interfered with. He had wild liberty. He had absolute confidence in himself. He felt perfectly certain that he knew enough to take care of himself.

"Let those remain tied to their mother's apron strings who want to," said he; "I am a grown man, and I know a thing or two."

No doubt, if any counsel had been offered him, he would have thrown it off indignantly. He was going to a far country where nobody could oversee him. He sought liberty; but it was the liberty of the lower nature. It was not the liberty of the moral sense, striving to disengage itself from the thrall of superstition. It was not the liberty of a noble nature, seeking other channels for sympathy and beneficence. It was not the liberty of a generous soul who, seeing the truth, is resolved to break through old accustomed ways, and give up the world, though it should cost him his name or his life. It was not the liberty of the upper man. It was the liberty of the lower man. It was that kind of liberty which is called *license;* and he soon became licentious—for it is said:

"He took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living."

He poured out freely his means upon the cup. He indulged in the wildest and merriest dances. He was full of gayety because he was full of youthful spirits. He denied himself nothing that his eye saw, that his ear heard, or that his heart coveted; and his passion became counsellors.

"When he had spent all [and it did not take him a great while to do it], there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want."

Of course, now there was nothing for him to do but to ask assistance from those neighborly fellows who had met him so often and enjoyed his hospitality. The moment he made his necessities known to them of course they would succor him. Not so. When he sought their aid they were nowhere to be found. Those who had shown him so much friendship, admired him, walked with him, coquetted with him, gone into every excess with him—they, surely, by their loving sympaty, would bear up a fellow sinner. No, they had other friends now. They could not attend to him. All his companions were gone. There was none who cared for him.

There is many and many a young man who is walking on the same track in the world. To-day he has friends enough. Just as long as his pocket holds out, his company will be sought, but when his pocket gives out he will be abandoned. No selfishness is so hideous as the selfishness which prevails among the passionate who, having enjoyed all the wild delirium of pleasure with

each other, heartlessly abandon one another in the hour of extremity.

"When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And [since he could do nothing else] he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine."

He went into the saloon to begin with, and he went into the pig-pen to end with. It was not a long reach from the glory, the dazzle, the pride, the vanity, the lust and the license of his youth, to the humiliation and the shame, the degradation and the want of a swine-herd. There is no recall of him, no yearning after him. But there are a great many men that spent their substance and their youth and their health in riotous living who have a heart left. There are many bad men who have much in them that is good—who have a sense of honor lingering in them; who have aspirations, and who have yearnings for things high and noble. There is many a man who has philosophy with which to reason on his own mistakes, and who longs to reascend the path by which he descended so swiftly.

So was it with this young man, who had spent all, and began to be in want; and who went and joined himself to a citizen, who sent him into the fields to feed swine. He went, and for aught that we can see he did his work faithfully. He began to be sensible at last; for when a man has gone down by false steps of self-abuse it is something if he accepts his situation, and sets up, in the low depth to which he has sunk, some foundation for renewed life.

Well, you will observe how this young man is spoken of, as if he had been insane. It is said, "When he came to himself," He had not really been himself. Every man has an equator, and all below that line is animal, while all above that line is himself. The upper manhood, the highest nature, is not the animal in you. It is that which allies you to the angelic, to God, to the invisible and eternal world. There is many and many a man who lives in his lower nature, and who is, as it were, insane, but whose sins, whose remorse, and the misery which comes from these, begin to bring him to his better nature. He has proved the lower nature, and found its falsity, its oppression, and its danger; and through the suffering which comes from the wild indulgence of his lower nature—that which he is to leave with the dust when he dies—the door is open to that which is higher.

"He came to himself." As a man that has been insane is, by some cooling draught or potion, brought to sanity and reason again, and is softened, and made rational, so this young man was brought to himself.

Blessed are they who, after following temptation and solicitation, and repairing misery, learn by that misery what is the royalty of their better nature, and are ashamed of sin and of sinning. Such was his extremity of suffering that he "would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him." He was alone. He was uncared for and unprovided for. Those sweet and edible pods which were fed to the swine he would have chewed for his own sustenance.

Well, he had time for one thing—he had time, amidst his grunting charge, amidst the chanking swine, to think; he had time to suffer; he had time to be sorry. There are a great many men who have not time to be virtuous; who have not time to be religious; who have not time to do a great many things; but there is no man who does not find time, by and by, to be very sorry, very sad, in his adversity. So did this young man, "when he came to himself;" and I do not know that there is anything in this world more touching than that vision of his home which rises, in their extremity, upon the wicked, either to torment them, or to lure them by the hope and promise of sympathy and succor.

I have stood by the side of those that were sick, and I could bear to witness their pain; I could harden myself, as a surgeon would, to perform all the offices that were needful for their restoration; but when, in the midst of their trouble, when perhaps unconscious of what they were saying, they would call out, "Father! Father!" or "Mother! Mother!" it was more than I could bear. The going back of those who have gone through a career of license and wickedness to the visions of childhood, its sweet innocence, the security of home, and the joy and pleasure of household fellowship—I think there is nothing that touches a sensitive person more than this.

And so the Prodigal Son, when he was reduced, through indulgence, to extreme distress, and when no man would show him any charity or any succor, began to bethink himself of his own father's house; and he said:

"How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will

arise, and go to my father, and I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee."

Now, that is honest; that is manly. Ife did not say, "I will arise and go to my father, and I will state the circumstances." Oh, no.

If there is anything in this world that is the devil of the casuist, it is "circumstances!" But he was not so bad as that. Having sinned, he had courage to look upon his sin and call it sin, and know that it was sin, and take it in all its magnitude. He attempted no acquittal, no palliation, no excuse, no piteous fear, addressed to the compassion of his old father.

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.'"

Here begins to spring out the exquisite delicacy and sensibility of a heart that is returning to a wholesome repentence, to nobility and to truth. He is already partly reformed whose soul begins to move to higher instincts.

"I am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants."

Beautiful, that is, in its simplicity and humility. He knew how to go down, and, blessed be God, he knew how to go up, too; but there are a great many men who know how to go down but do not know how to go up.

Well, how fared it with him?

"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off his father saw him."

Men see a great way with telescopes; eagles and vultures see a vast distance; but I take it, that there is

no eye that is so unerring and that sees so far and so sure as a parent's eye looking for a lost child.

"When he was yet a great way off his father saw him."

And he saw all that was good in him; for fatherhood in its purest form is the truest expression, as it is the sign and the symbol of the Godhead.

"When he was a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

He waited for no word. He put him upon no conditions. There was no preparation. His father did to this son, that returned, just that which God does, and to all eternity will do, to every erring or struggling spirit that, uprising, goes to Him—He gave him something of of himself; he gave him acceptance; he gave him sympathy and kindness. It is the nature of God, it is the nature of every true father, to do it.

The beauteous child, flattered and deceived, in an evil moment, flees and wanders, and goes from bad to worse; and the mother's heart is sore through years, hearing from her and yet not being able to recover her; but at twilight, on some evening, as the mother sits and sees things darkling, there comes a form, ill-clad, with feeble steps and sunken cheek, through the open gate. The mother knows her, and with open arms rushes to embrace the child that has come back. No word is spoken. Both hearts are pouring out a sacred tide. She bears her child to the house, "Mother, I have come home to die." "My child, live."

Ought not the mother to say, "The public sentiment

of this neighborhood requires that I should call out from you some token that you have repented"? Ought she not to put her on some condition? Would it not be a violation of public sentiment to take her back without words?

Nay; is there anything that cleanses away the sin of a child so fast as the loving heart of a parent?

Men seem to think that there must be some preparation through which a man shall come to God. Yes, the everlasting nature of God himself. That is the preparation. It is the heart and soul of divine love that quickens to remorse the hearts of men that go wrong; that brings light to their darkness; that sees them afar off; that draws them by the cords of love; and that takes them then with a heart overflowing with forgiveness, not because they have done this, that or the other thing, hut because God is infinite in sympathy and in love; because God's nature, the moment your soul is open to it, pours a stream of cleansing redemption into it. God forgives from what he is, and not from what you have been.

The young man had come, you know, with a good orthodox confession; and he was going to pour it into his father's ear; but he found himself embraced, and wept over, and kissed.

He struggled through, and said, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven. and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." He could not get out the other part—"make me as one of thy servants." He was smothered in his father's embrace, and he could not get it out.

What was the father's reply? He did not hear what

the son said ; it all, as it were, went to the wind ; and he called to his servants, in fatherly gladness :

"Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand [that scrawny hand which had just come from the husks and the swine], and shoes on his feet ; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it ; and let us eat and be merry."

And the reason was :

"For this, my son, was dead and is alive again."

That was reason enough for you and me, and for every noble man and woman, because God has lent us a little of his own feeling. There is no other argument.

Our Father in Heaven is purer and better than earthly fathers ; and if an earthly father knows how to bear and forbear, and wait to be gracious, and, with a generosity of love, to forgive those who have gone wrong, how much more shall God forgive, and cherish, and build up to eternal life, every one that comes to Him, or that desires to come to Him.

Well, this is a beautiful picture ; but still, we must finish the whole scene. There was one other son. We have now, next, one of these perfect folk who censured Christ for eating with sinners ; one of these pharisaic precisionists ; one of these men who thanked God that they never stumbled ; one of these men that knew what was right, and always did it. The story is in this language :

"This, my son, was dead and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

The old house shook. The lights glanced through

the windows. The music was wafted into the field, where this exceedingly good elder brother was.

"Now, his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew nigh to the house [he could not imagine what they were about there] he heard music and dancing [it seems to have been a long time since there had been anything of that sort in the old house]; and he called one of the servants, and he asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and he would not go in; therefore, came his father out, and entreated him. And he, answering, said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends; but, as soon as this, thy son, was come, which had devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf."

Well, now, I would rather be the repenting Prodigal Son than the elder brother. Was not he a mean sneak? and was it not designed that these two brothers should stand over against each other and teach the world? The contrast between a man who, by strong and impetuous inclination, is led to sin, as the publicans sinned, as the sinners sinned, as the harlots and courtesans of Galilee and Jerusalem sinned—between a man who is carried away by his overpowering passions, but who, when he sees the final results of his wicked course, rebounds, and goes back, and frankly, honestly, acknowledges his sin—between such a man and one like this elder brother? Is

not that character painted so that it seems a great deal more admirable than that of this precise fellow who never sinned at all, to his own thinking?

He never got drunk—no, he was too stingy to get drunk. He never could afford wine. He spent nothing on courtesans. He was too cold, too unsympathizing. He did not give a loose rein to passion. It was the very pride of his life that he never did wrong. He was one of these locked-up, tied-up Pharisees, who are so afraid of going wrong that they do not go anywhere—who are so afraid of doing wrong that they do not do anything. He was self-contained, self-worshipping, and exceedingly proper.

He was going toward Heaven stiff, stingy, lean, mean, selfish. He was going to Heaven like a mummy. And when his brother went away he probably damned him in his heart right orthodoxly; when he heard how he was going on afar off in foreign lands, no doubt he had a very great horror of sin, in other folks; and when he heard that he had come back again, doubtless he said, "The beast of burden back on my father's hands! Now he will be dividing his substance with him, and I shall have less. Besides all that, look at the difference between us. I never ran away and he did. I never fell into any impetuosities, and he did. I never squandered anything upon harlots, and he did. In all my life I have never done anything that was improper. I am made like a clock, having a stroke at every hour, being regularly wound up, and keeping time; but that fellow has been through all sorts of circumgyratory courses of evil. My father has made for him a royal feast, but he never

made a feast for me. He never gave me even a kid, but he has given him a calf"—and he was so mad.

Where was that brother's heart? Where was his love of the cradle? Where were his childhood memories? Where were those ties of kinship and blood relationship that should have stirred every man to gladness who had a spark of manliness in him, on hearing that the Prodigal had come home? Where was that impulse that should have led him to rush into the house and greet his returned brother, and say, "Let me help you"? He would not go in. He stood off, and grumbled. The salvation of his brother from destruction; his restoration to honor and love; the repairing of the breach in the household—all these things fell on him without producing any more impression than they would produce upon a stone. And yet, he offered his sacrifices and rattled through his prayers every day, and kept, he thought, a pretty correct account in his bank up above. O Pharisee! Cold, unsympathizing moralist! How can one help despising such a man? You despise him when I am describing him. There is not a man, woman or child who does not feel, as I do, that this kind of dry morality is hateful. You feel that a man without any heart, without any pulse, without any warmth in his blood, hardly belongs to the human family.

And yet, many of you will walk in New York, and when you see some poor, drunken, filthy, ragged fellow, who has fallen step by step all the way down, and is trying to reform, I am afraid you will pass him by without a thought of sympathy—without one yearning. Yea, I do not know but you will thank God that you are not

as other men are. Perhaps you will say, "I might have fallen into such wickedness, but I was strong, and so was saved from it."

When we see these flaunting mistresses of the street, there is much that shocks our delicacy; yet I never look upon them that inside of me there are not tears which move as from a fountain. When I see them, I see the mother; I see the childhood; I see the girlhood; I see the sad days of neglect and abandonment, I see the dying; I see the cheap funeral, with no mourners; and not only do I see the things that are visible, but I see the inner and spiritual reality.

Do you see these things? Does your heart go out to strict people, and orthodox people, and church people, and your set of people in your denomination? and do you look upon those who are outside of your denomination, upon those who are not church people, upon worldly people, upon people who have made mistakes in life, who have stumbled, and gone to the ground, degraded and ruined, from a high point—do you look upon these with coldness, and even with bitter contempt? Then you are the elder brother.

If there be any meaning in this parable, it is that if a man stands where he thinks he is proper and right and virtuous, and has no compassion for his fellowmen who are in distress or want, even though it is by reason of their own folly, then he is the elder brother. Such a man is more despicable than he who has sinned more grossly, and yet seeks to repent.

That is the meaning of our Saviour when He said, on another occasion, to these proud Jewish religionists:

"Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you"

It is as if He had said to them, "Their chances are better than yours." Hardness of heart, the want of charity for others, lack of sympathy and genuine beneficence—this is a crying sin; and against no class in Judæa did our Saviour hurl such anathemas as against cultured people, whose consciences were educated, but who were hard-hearted toward their fellowmen, and whose piety was without sympathy.

Dissipation through the basilar passions is not less bad than you think; it is worse than you think; but the dissipation of the upper nature, by which all that is divine in a man is turned to coldness and selfishness, is a worse dissipation than the other.

In closing, I will add a few points. In the first place, let me say that, according to this narrative, it is never too late to mend.

Perhaps there are some persons that have strayed in here who have been thinking to themselves, "What did he pick out that subject for? I wonder if he knew that I was coming. He has described my case exactly. I have been running away from my parents, from my instructors, from my own self. I have slipped and slipped; I have lost my name and position; I am hovering between life and death; and it is strange that he should have selected such a subject as that."

No, it is not any more strange than that God should think of you, and by His providence should draw you where you hear such themes discussed. And I have a personal message for you. I have to say to you, to-night,

you are a great deal worse than you think you are; you are a great deal worse than you yourself can measure or understand; and yet there is mercy in the heart of God for you. It is not too late for you to mend. It is not too late for you to turn round and go back to your Father, and say, "I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight!"

I have to say, secondly, to all such persons, and to all who are struggling to amend their mistakes, and to rise to a true life, that the heart of God is in its full tide of sympathy, and that those who need his help will receive it. "The bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench, till He shall bring forth judgment unto victory."

Do you remember that remarkable scene which took place when our Master, a month or two before the crucifixion, was for the last time going from Galilee to Jerusalem? As He came to a Samaritan village, the people refused to give Him shelter, or food, or drink. The disciples had been sent forward to prepare for His stay there over night; and John, whose name is now synonymous with the most perfect gentleness and love, but who had had a fiery temper, said, with James, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from Heaven, and consume them?" And the Master rebuked them, and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Jesus Christ came to teach this grand revelation of the universe; that in spite of all the dark appearances of

things, regnant in the center of all power, in the midst of all that wisdom, whence issues that which controls all laws, there is a Heart that is full of compassion. The law of the universe is to restore, to recuperate; and the heart of God is on the side of every man who needs divine love, divine pity, and divine mercy. You have not the power in yourself to do everything. You can do something; but, after all, the great work, the transforming work, the blessed work that is done in us, is the pouring out into our souls of the nature and inspiration of the love of God manifested to us through the love of Jesus Christ.

Not only is God's heart on the side of the poor and needy, it is on the side of those who have stumbled by reason of strong drink, by reason of dishonesty, or by reason of headstrong passions or lusts. If you have gone through every one of the grades of defilement, and you find yourself among the swine, the heart of God is still on your side. It is on the side of the off-scouring and the most wretched of creation.

Are you without a friend and without a benefactor? God is your friend, and God is your benefactor.

"Yes," you say, "He would be if I would repent; but I do not feel like repenting." God is your benefactor repenting or not repenting. Repentence does not change Him; it changes you.

When the son was yet a great way off, and before one word had entered into the father's ear, the father ran to meet him; and if you have in your soul one single movement toward hope; if there begins to be in your soul a

letting go of things that are past; if there begins to be in your soul one aspiration, one yearning; if you say, "If I could only try; I have tried once, and failed, and it is of no use for me to try again; but yet, I cannot give it up, and I would be glad to try again," those thoughts in you are the fruit of the Spirit. They are the result of the moving of the Spirit upon your understanding and conscience and heart.

Now, I beseech of you, grieve not the Spirit of God! for what is He? He describes Himself as one whose tenderness and gentleness are such that the bruised reed He will not break, and the smoking flax He will not quench, till He brings forth judgment unto victory.

That is, He is so gentle in His dealings with men whose integrity, whose standing, is liable to be cast down as is the tallest reed that is the least able to stand against the wind—He is so gentle in His dealings with them that He will not overthrow them. So gentle is He in His dealings with men that in no way will He make it hard for them to stand or to recover themselves.

You know, when the flame is first lit on a candle how feeble it is, and how reluctant it is to burn; so that the least breath of air, caused by the movement of your body, blows it out; and if there is in your soul the beginning of a desire for a better life, no larger, no brighter, than just the tip of the flame kindled on the wick of a candle, so gently does God deal with this merest speck of light of another and better life that He will not quench it till He brings you through all the stages of reformation.

You have gone wrong, all of you. There is not one here who cannot lay his hand on his heart and say, "I am a great sinner, and it is the grace and forbearance of God that give me life and mercy."

There is not a single one of you that cannot say, "Lord, I have sinned, and I am not worthy to be called thy son," and yet you have the assurance that God's heart forgives, that God's love strengthens, and that God's wisdom will guide you till you are brought through various states of development to that condition in which you may be transferred to the Heavenly land, and begin again, with ample power and a better guidance, to reap nobler fruits and an eternal blessedness.

YIELD NOT TO TEMPTATION.

Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin ;
Each victory will help you some other to win.
Fight manfully onward—dark passions subdue ;
Look ever to Jesus—He 'll carry you through !

Ask the Savior to help you,
Comfort, strengthen and keep you ;
He is willing to aid you—
He will carry you through.

Shun evil companions ; bad language disdain ;
God's name hold in rev'rence, nor take it in vain.
Be thoughtful and earnest, kind-hearted and true.
Look ever to Jesus—He 'll carry you through !

Ask the Savior to help you,
Comfort, strengthen and keep you ;
He is willing to aid you—
He will carry you through.

To him that o'ercometh God giveth a crown ;
Thro' faith we shall conquer, tho' often cast down.
He who is our Savior our strength will renew.
Look ever to Jesus—He 'll carry you through !

Ask the Savior to help you,
Comfort, strengthen and keep you ;
He is willing to aid you—
He will carry you through.

DESCRIBED BY ONE OF THE MOST ELOQUENT PREACHERS OF HIS TIME IN EUROPE.

REV. THOMAS GUTHRIE, D. D.

JESUS.

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."—St. James i. 2.

Look at our Lord's case! How clearly it shows that temptatiou, however much to be dreaded by us, is harmless, unless where it finds corruption—that the seed dies, unless it falls on a congenial soil! He lived among temptations for more than thirty successive years. For more than thirty years His holy manhood was in the fire; and He came out of it without stain or sin. The Lamb of God, without spot or blemish, holy, harmless, undefiled, He was among, and yet separate from, sinners. A remarkable phenomenon this! one sinless among the sinful; pure amid pollution; a faultless man, in whose chaste and placid bosom temptation never kindled a wish, a thought, a fancy that might not be exposed to the eyes both of God and man. He Himself explains the wonder —"The prince of this world cometh, and hath **nothing in me.**"

Bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, true man as well as God, He drank of our cup—enjoying as much, and more, than we, the pleasures of friendship, the loveliness of nature, the feast, kindness spread, the happy faces of a marriage scene, seasons of welcome rest amid mountain solitudes, by Galilee's smiling lake, in the sweet society of Bethany. But was it for these He lived? for enjoyment, or for employment? for others, or Himself? Himself! He denied Himself; forgot Himself; barely allowed Himself the rest that nature needed. His heart felt, and His eye wept, and His hand was ready for all human wretchedness. Who so patient with the bad—so gentle to the erring—so tender to the penitent? Who sought His help in vain? What poor beggar unpitied, or poor sinner unpardoned, ever left His door? What blessings fell from the hands, on what errands of mercy went the sacred feet, they nailed, O Calvary, to thy cruel, accursed tree!

But there is a view of Christ as our model which makes the imitation of Him appear less impracticable; for, as the great circles of the heavens seem to bend towards, and touch, and embrace the earth at the horizon, so the Son of the Most High, though exalted apparently above all approach in His divinity, appears near to us in His humanity. In that nature he presents us with a model we may more hopefully attempt to imitate. How should it encourage us to attempt it, and, not disheartened by successive failures, to try it again and again, to remember that Jesus, though without sin, was made in all points like His brethren,—bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; with a heart strung in every respect

like our own? Animated by the breath of God, the dust of Palestine, like that of Paradise, could have produced, in the second Adam, a man with every faculty mature. But Jesus sprang into being like one of us. He despised not the Virgin's womb; and passed through all the common phases of human life—His conditions and connections in the world in no apparent manner differing from ours.

A babe, He was rocked in a cradle and fed at the breast like others. A child, He had the feelings, and entered into the common joys of childhood; He might have been seen in his night-dress lisping prayers at His mother's knee; nor was He made in all points like as we are if He stood apart from the innocent sports of the boys and girls of Nazareth.

A man, He went to church on Sabbath; and on other days, the sun lighting its Maker to His daily toil, He wrought at a bench, and ate His bread in the sweat of His brow. He was bound to others by the ordinary ties of humanity—this man was a cousin; these were His brethren and sisters; and, among the women who followed Him to Calvary, and wept by His cross, she, on whose form, as it sinks fainting into John's arms, His last earthly look is fixed, is His mother.

Indeed, so like was He in all things to His brethren that, until the last three years of His life, His townsmen never seem to have suspected who or what Jesus was,—that He was anything more than Joseph's son. They never so much as fancied that the God of their worship was present in the synagogue; that the Messiab, of whose glorious coming the preacher discoursed in



THE LAST SUPPER.—From the Painting by Gustave Dore.

glowing colors, was there—in the meek, modest, gentle, unassuming man who sat by Mary, listening to the sermon.

And for what purpose did the Son of God thus identify Himself with our humanity? In tasting every common cup—the obedience of childhood and labors of manhood, the pleasures of friendship and the sharp arrows of ingratitude, the kindness of affection and the cold neglects of selfishness, the joy of feasts and the grief of funerals, all they suffer who toil for daily bread, or, animated with philanthropy, toil in the cause of others—our Lord not only thereby became a High Priest to sympathize and succor us, as one touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but, leaving His footprints on the sands of time, He became an example that we should follow His steps.

Would any one know how to live, let him turn to Christ's history and read it there. See how He lived devoted to the glory of God and the good of men; how He made it His meat and drink to do His Father's will and also reverenced and obeyed His parents; how He honored the Sabbath Day, and kept the whole law of God; how, neither envious of the rich, nor ambitious to rise above His circumstances, He submitted to a humble lot, and patiently endured its trials; how He bore a life-long humiliation with contentment, and His few brief honors with humility; how He cherished His friends and forgave His bitterest enemies; how, gently rebuking the bad, and kindly raising the fallen, instructing the ignorant, helping the weak, shielding the oppressed, pitying all that sorrowed, relieving all that suffered, loving all

that lived, He lived for others, not for Himself. In these things He set an example.

And, as I have seen a weaver on his loom working the beautiful flowers of a pattern into his web, let us, by God's gracious help, try to weave a copy of Christ's life into the body of our own. Men of God, for you no better shield against temptation, or stouter buckler in a battle-day, no better curb to pull us up on the edge of sin, nor sharper spur to urge us onward in the path of duty, than a constant imitation of Christ; the habit of bringing all our conduct to this holy test—Had Christ been in my circumstances, how would He have acted!—Would He have felt, would He have spoken, would He have acted as I am doing? The Spirit helping us, we shall thus become living epistles of Jesus Christ seen and read of all men; true followers of Him whose history is thus summed up in this brief but weighty sentence, "He went about doing good." With aims no less lofty, let His holy, beautiful beneficent life be the model of ours; and its motto—nobler than any ever blazoned on banners of silk, in letters of gold, and borne before the greatest kings—its motto this: TO ME TO LIVE IN CHRIST, AND TO DIE IN GAIN.

Besides the glory of God, another grand end for which we should live, as this, and many other passages, and I may say all Scripture, teaches, is the good of others. An end this which we shall be the better able to keep in view, and reach, by forming a correct and sufficiently large idea of what is meant by the term *brother*, as employed by our Lord and His apostles.

Now, when our Lord was, on one occasion, address-

ing the people, some hearer on the outskirts of the crowd, interrupted Him, to say, "Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee!"

As when the lilies bloomed at His feet; or a little bird, free of care, sat sweetly singing on a bending spray; or a sower, girt with sheet, paced the furrows of a neighboring field, flinging the corn broadcast from his hand; or the valley stood below, with two houses by its brawling stream, one a ruin on a bank of sand, the other weather-beaten and gray with age, yet firmly planted on a rock whose sides the flood was vainly chafing—so here our Lord seized the opportunity this interruption offered to teach an important truth.

To the man's appeal and the people's astonishment, Jesus returns this memorable answer, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" adding, as He stretches forth His hand and points to His disciples, "Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother!"

Was our Lord a stranger to filial or fraternal affection that He spoke what seems to slight the dearest relationship; and on another occasion, addressed His mother not by that endearing term, but irreverent and unrespectful-like, said, "Woman, my hour is not yet come"!

By no means—as His life's last, dark closing hours bear witness. It is said that the ruling passion is strong in death—hence the dying scholar has been heard muttering classic odes in place of David's psalms; hence the

old soldier has fancied himself once more on the field of battle, and put forth his remaining strength, ere he sank back in death on his pillow, to raise a feeble arm, and wave a swordless arm, and, startling the onlookers, thunder out the charge ; and hence, also, when death had struck him from the helm, the last words of the statesman, ere he sank, have been of the fortunes of his country. And if the ruling passion be strong in death, I am willing that our Lord should be judged by this test. When that alabaster box was broken, what precious spikenard breathed forth to fill the Church and world with its fragrance ? Judged by this test, never mother had a more tender son than our Lord ; His last, loving, living looks were turned on Mary, and He would seem, amid the agony of the cross, to have forgotten His own sufferings in sympathy with hers.

The birth of an heir to the throne is usually accompanied by circumstances benefitting so great an event. No place is deemed worthy of it but a royal palace ; and there, at the approach of the expected hour, high nobles and the great officers of state assemble, while the whole country, big with hope, waits to welcome a successor to its long line of kings. Cannons announce the event ; seaward, landward, guns flash and roar from floating batteries and rocky battlements ; bonfires blaze on hilltops ; steeples ring out the news in merry peals ; the nation holds holiday, giving itself up to banqueting and enjoyments, while public prayers and thanksgivings rise to Him by Whom kings reign and princes decree justice. With such pomp and parade do the heirs of earthly thrones enter on the stage of life ! So came not He Who

is the King of kings and Lord of lords. On the eve of His birth the world went on its usual round. None were moved for His coming, nor was there any preparation for the event—a chamber or anything else. No fruit of unhallowed love, no houseless beggar's child enters life more obscurely than the Son of God. The very tokens by which the shepherds were taught to recognize Him were not the majesty but the extreme meanness of His condition:

"This shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

In fact, the Lord of Heaven was to be recognized by His humiliation, as its heirs are by their humility. Yet, as we have seen a black and lowering cloud have its edges touched with living gold by the sun behind it, so all the darkest scenes of our Lord's life appear more or less irradiated with the splendors of a strange glory. Take that night on Galilee, when a storm roared over land and lake, enough to wake all but the dead.

The boat with Jesus and His disciples tears through the waves, now whirling on their foaming crests, now plunging into their yawning hollows; the winds rave in His ear; the spray falls in cold showers on His naked face; but He sleeps.

I have read of a soldier boy who was found buried in sleep beneath his gun, amid the cries and carnage of the battle; and the powers of nature in our Lord seem to be exhausted. His strength is spent with toil; and with wan face and wasted form He lies stretched out on some rude boards—the picture of one whose candle is burning away all too fast, and whom excess of zeal is hurrying

into premature old age and an untimely grave. Was the sight such as to suggest the question, "Where is now thy God?"

How soon it changed into a scene of magnificence and omnipotent power!

He wakes—as a mother, whom louder sounds would not stir, to her infant's feeblest wail, He wakes to the cry of His alarmed disciples; and standing up, with the lightning flash illuminating His calm, divine face, He looks out on the terrific war of elements. He speaks; and all is hushed.

Obedient to His will, the winds fold their wings, the waves sink to rest; and there is a great calm.

"Glory to God in the highest!"

"How may His people catch up and continue the strain which falls from angels' lips? In disciples, plucked from the very jaws of death, and pulling their boat shoreward with strong hands and happy hearts over a moonlit, glassy sea, Jesus shows us how He will make good these sayings, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not afraid, for I am thy God"—"I have given unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish."

The divine glory of that scene is not peculiar to it. For as an eagle, so soon as she has stooped from her realm to the ground, mounts aloft again, soaring into the blue skies of her native heavens, our Lord never descends into the abasement of His meanest circumstances without some act which bespeaks divinity, and bears Him up before our eyes into the regions of Godhead.

The grave, where He weeps like a woman, gives up its prisoner at His word.

Athirst by Jacob's well, like any other wayfaring, way-worn traveller, He begs a draught of water from a woman there, but tells her all she ever did.

Houseless and poor, His banquet hall is the open air, His table the green grass, His feast five barley loaves and a few fishes from the neighboring lake, yet this scanty fare supplies the wants of five thousand guests. His birth, and life, and death, His whole history, in fact, resembles one of those treasure-chests which double-locks secure; for as that iron safe yields its hoards of gold, silver, pearls, and precious stones to none but him who brings to each lock its own appropriate key, so the riches of divine truth, redeeming love, and saving mercy are open only to such as come to Jesus with a belief in His divinity on the one hand, and a belief in His humanity on the other;—who behold in the child, whose birth was sung by angels, the son of Mary, and worship the only begotten, well beloved, and eternal Son of God.

Now, this mingling of divine and human characters distinguished Christ's birth as much as His death. The halo of glory that surrounded His dying, crowned His infant head. His sun rose, as it afterward set, behind a heavy bank of clouds; but the divinity they screened, touched their edges alike with burning gold; so that He, at whose death the rocks were rent, and the sun eclipsed, and graves deserted of their dead, no more entered than He left our world as a common son of Adam.

Not that a world which was to reject Him went out to meet its King with homage and royal honors. Omen of coming events, it received Him in sullen silence. But the heavens declared His glory, the skies sent out a

sound; and the tokens of His first advent—unlike the thunders which shall rend the skies when He comes the second time to judgment—were all in beautiful harmony with its object.

It was love and saving mercy; there were light:, music, and angel forms. With this object, all things indeed were in perfect keeping,—the serene night—the shining stars—the pearly dews glittening on the grass—snowy flocks safely pasturing—and the shepherds themselves, to whom the annunciation was made; men who, whether going before their charge, or carrying their lambs in their arms. or gently leading those that were with young, or standing bravely between their flocks and the roaring lion, were the choicest emblems and types of Him who, dying to save us, gave His life for the sheep. To them there suddenly appeared a multitude of the heavenly host, turning night into day, and shedding on the soft hills around a bright but gentle radiance.

As guard of honor, they had swept in their downward flight by many a sun and star, escorting the Son of God to our nether world. And now—ere they left Him to tread the wine-press alone, and returned on upward wings to their native heavens, and their service before the throne of God—these celestials bent their loving eyes on the stable; and, in anticipation of Jesus' triumphs, of men saved, death conquered, graves spoiled, and Satan crushed, they sang,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

It was one, and not the least singular of its aspects, that this cloud always grew light when the world grew

dark—the cloudy pillar of the day blazing forth at night as a pillar of fire. So shone the divinity in Him who was "Emmanuel, God with us." His darkest circumstances, His deepest humiliations, being the occasions of His greatest glory.

He was buried, and being so, was greatly humbled; but angels attended His funeral, and guarded His tomb. He was crucified, condemned to the death of the vilest criminal, and being so, was greatly humbled; but those heavens and the earth which are as little moved by the death of the greatest monarch as by the fall of a withered leaf, expressed their sympathy with the august Sufferer —the sun hid his face, and went into mourning, the earth trembled with horror at the deed.

He was born, and in like manner He was greatly humbled, and had been, though His birth had happened in a palace and His mother had been a queen; but with a poor woman for His mother, a stable for His birthplace, a manger for His cradle, and straw for His bed, these meannesses, like the spots on the face of the sun, were lost in a blaze of glory.

Earth did not celebrate His advent, but Heaven did. Illuminating her skies, she sent herald angels to proclaim the news, and lighted up a new star to guide the feet which sought the place where man's best hopes were cradled. The most joyful birth that ever happened, it was meat that it should be sung by angel lips,—and all the more because, redemption glorifies God in the sight of holy angels.

The prophet foretells a time when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the

kid; and, bound in the same stall, and fed at the same manger, the lion shall eat straw with the ox.

Here is a greater wonder! This stable is the house of God, the very gate of Heaven; under this dusty roof, inside those narrow walls, He lodges whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain; the tenant of this manger is the Son, who leaving the bosom of His Father to save us, here pillows His head on straw; of this feeble babe the hands are to hurl Satan from his throne, and wrench asunder the strong bars of death; this one tender life, this single corn-seed is to become the prolific parent of a thousand harvests, and fill the garners of glory with the fruits of salvation.

Mean as it looks, yet more splendid than marble palaces,—more sacred than the most venerable and hallowed temples, here the Son of God was born, and with Him were born Faith, Hope and Charity—our Peace, our Liberty, and our Eternal Life.

Had He not been born, we had never been born again; had He not lain in a manger, we had never lain in Abraham's bosom; had He not been wrapped in swaddling-clothes, we had been wrapped in everlasting flames; had His head in infancy not been pillowed on straw, and in death on thorns, ours had never been crowned in glory. But that He was born, better we had never been; life had been a misfortune to which time had brought no change, and death no relief, and the grave no rest.

"Glory to God in the highest," that He was born; we had otherwise been lifting up our eyes in torment with this unavailing, endless cry, "O that my mother

had been my grave! Cursed be the day wherein I was born!"

There was only one way of restoring peace; but it involved a sacrifice on God's part which the most sanguine had never dared to hope for. If the Lord of Heaven and Earth, veiling His glory, would assume our nature, would take the form of a servant, would stoop to the work of a subject, would die the death of a sinner, we might be saved—not otherwise; if He would leave Heaven, we might enter it—not otherwise; if He would die, we might live—not otherwise; if He would enter the grave, its captor, we might leave it, its conquerors—not otherwise; if He, as our substitute, would fulfill the requirements of the law, both in doing our work and discharging our debt, both obeying and suffering in our stead, peace could be restored—not otherwise. For these ends God did not spare His Son, but gave Him up to death, "that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life;" and the "set time" having come at length, Jesus descended on our world, to make peace through the blood of His cross—His angel train, ere they returned to Heaven, holding a concert in the skies.

Dying, the Just for the unjust, He has made peace; and these are the easy terms:

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

How gladly should we accept them? If men reject peace what chance for them in war?

ADAM.

Yet what many would not directly, they indirectly lay at God's door—in the attempt to excuse themselves, accusing Him. Look, for example, at Adam's answer to the question, "Hast thou eaten of the tree?" Summoned from his hiding-place, standing beside the blushing partner of his guilt, overwhelmed by strange terrors, trembling in every limb, the prey of anguish and remorse, had his tongue, cleaving to the roof of his mouth, refused to do its office, we should not have been astonished. But he replies; and his answer betrays cunning rather than confusion. How mean and dastardly, how base and selfish and hateful, has sin made this once noble creature! How are the mighty fallen! See him trying to turn over on his poor wife the whole vengeance of an angry God! He attempts to save himself, and leave her to bear the brunt of it; hers is the guilt; she is the temptress. Hear him:

"The woman, she gave me and I did eat."

Nor is that all; nor "the front of his offending." More, and worse still, he divides the blame between her and God. It is not simply, "the woman gave me and I did eat," but "the woman *that thou gavest me*, she gave me, and I did eat;" a serpent in my bosom. I got her from thee; the circumstances in which thou didst place me, more than my own fault, are answerable for my sin.

"The woman that *thou* gavest me!"

What was this but a covert way of accusing God; a bold insinuation that God, not he, was to blame for the Fall; an excuse, that, like all our apologies for sin, adds insult to injury; and but aggravates the offence?

ST. JAMES.

But submission is not the highest lesson taught in the school of trial. That school has higher instruction and nobler prizes. It is a great thing to learn submission; but it is a grand thing to rejoice in, and rejoice over our afflictions, as St. Paul did; and St. James says, we are to "count it all joy when we fall into divers trials."

Why not? Why should that language surprise us? Why should we start at it? Why hear it with an incredulous ear, if seasons of trial are the occasions of drawing out the tenderest love of God? Why not, if they correspond to the sick-bed and sick-chamber, where we get into the innermost circle of domestic affections? By the anxiety all show for our recovery; by the midnight watching at our bed; by no trouble grudged, but sleep, and rest, and pleasure, and everything sacrificed for us; by the noiseless step and gentle whispers; by the cloud that darkens every brow when physicians look grave, and our case looks worse; by the joy that sits on every face when we are better; by a thousand little kind attentions that, never thought of in the day of health, come out shining like the stars at night; we now know how precious we are to others, how much we are valued, how tenderly loved.

It is almost worth being ill to know this, and receive the kindnesses that our illness calls out. Is that a set-off to thy pains of sickness?

How many of the Lord's people have had this to set against their sorest trials, that they never felt nearer to God, and God never drew nearer, nor dealt so kindly with them, as when they were cast into darkness and the

deeps—their affliction abounded, but then their consolations much more abounded. It was on the mount where it lightened and thundered that God showed them His glory. It was in the wilderness that water gushed from the smitten rock and they ate of angels' food; that the pillared cloud was seen by day, the pillared fire by night. It was when their bark was tempest-tossed, and the sky dark, and the sea was rough, that Christ came walking on the billows to still the tempest, to subdue their fears. Can they ever forget how then and there He fulfilled the gracious promise—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; thou shalt walk through the fire, and not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Fear not, for I am with thee. For I am the Lord, thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior."

GIDEON.

CHRIST's followers, though weary of, are to persevere in their work, watch and warfare—persevere to the end; like Gideon and his three hundred men, though "faint, yet pursuing." If, for the sake of illustration, we select the last of these three grand branches of Christian duty, namely, the warfare, where could we find a better pattern than his case supplies? Whether the overwhelming numbers of the enemy, or the extraordinary means of their defeat is considered, the victory which he and his

band achieved, and followed up with unsparing slaughter, is one of the most remarkable on record.

God's foes and his, the Midianites and Amalekites, we are told, "lay along in the Valley of the Jezreel, like grasshoppers, for multitude—their camels without number, as the sand on the seaside, for multitude."

Inspired of God, Gideon steps from the threshing-floor to summon his countrymen to arms; and, peasants leaving their plow in the furrow, shepherds their flocks on the hill, fishermen their boats by the shore, the bridegroom the marriage festival, and orphans their father's bier, they crowd to his standard. Two and thirty thousand men muster to the bloody fight; and on vantage ground, in some mountain gorge, what might not such an army accomplish with every man resolved to do or to die, to conquer or to perish?

But when the chaff is blown away, the thirty-two thousand are reduced to ten thousand; and these again to no more than three hundred men.

"If thou art afraid," said the Lord to Gideon—nor great wonder he should be with such odds against him—"go with thy servant down to the host and hear what they say."

With noiseless foot, wrapped in the cloud of night, he steals on the camp, and, listening, hears two soldiers talking—one tells how he dreamt that a barley cake came tumbling into the host, and, strange results, overturned a tent; a dream, his comrade interprets, saying, "This is nothing else than the sword of Gideon, for into his hand God hath delivered Midian and all the host."

Hailing the happy omen, Gideon stealthily withdraws,

and, breasting the hill with light heart, rushes in among his little band to cry, "Arise! the Lord hath delivered the host of Midian into your hand!"

They sprang to their feet; and each man with a sword by his thigh, a trumpet in one hand and in the other a pitcher with a burning lamp within, they follow their leader—his only ordert his, "As I do, so shall ye do!" It is the middle watch; and the mighty host, whose camp they silently encircle, lies buried in slumber. Each man holds his breath; silent and motionless he listens, and, bending forward, peers through the gloom for the expected signal.

Suddenly Gideon's trumpet, blown loud and clear, rings through the silence, and a lamp—for he has broken his pitcher—flashes on the darkness of night.

Lost in astonishment, the sentinels stop on their round; but ere they have time to raise the alarm, hundreds of lights are flashing, hundreds of trumpets sounding; and on all sides the air is rent with shouts and this wild battle cry; "The sword of the Lord and Gideon!"

Springing to their feet and rushing from their tents, the whole host is panic struck; and, mistaking friends for foes in the darkness and confusion, men grapple with their neighbors, and draw their swords to bury them in each other's bosoms.

The uproar grows wilder and wilder; the carnage rages fiercer and fiercer; Gideon and his men, the while, standing by to see the salvation of God.

The host destroys itself.

God wins the victory; and they who struck no blow reap the fruit—Gideon's only part being to put the bro-



SAMSON, SLAYING THE LION.
From the Painting hy Gustave Dore.

ken, bleeding fugitives to the sword, and hang on their rear, "faint, yet pursuing."

The part we have to act in the Christian warfare is similar to this; and similar to this should be the way we do it.

Gideon's followers were first reduced from two-and-thirty to ten thousand, and again reduced to three hundred; these being made spectators rather than actors in the bloody drama, that they might not say, "Mine own hand hath saved me!"

Such is the story of the Cross.

There, like Gideon and his men on the midnight plains of Jezreel, we stood by to see the salvation of our God —Satan, the enemy of our souls, bruised under the conqueror's heel. Jesus, not we, won that great victory. We struck no blow, we had no hand in it whatever; yet, like those who hung on the rear of Midian, slaughtering their flying foes, we had a part to act—our part this, to complete, if I may say so, the work which Christ began; to destroy every vestage of life in the serpent whose head He crushed; to expel sin wholly from our hearts and our habits, as Gideon expelled its enemies out of the land of Israel.

ST. JOHN.

It has been said that there are many ways of going out of the world, and but one of coming into it; and it may be said that there are many roads to hell, and but one to Heaven.

No doubt, in St. John's vision, where the final state and place of the blessed was represented as a glorious city, with streets of pure gold, and walls built of precious gems, all shining in light, that fell neither from sun nor moon, but streamed out in dazzling effulgence from the throne of God, he saw not one gate, but twelve.

These gates, each a pearl, and opening on streets of gold, had a meaning.

Standing open, and never shut by day or night, they betoken the security enjoyed by the blessed inhabitants; and also how open Heaven has been made to every sinner who seeks it through the blood of Christ.

Approach it in the right way, and whatever may have been your character, and is your age, country, or condition, you are free to enter unchallenged—without let or hindrance.

No armed sentinels, as at earthly palaces, guard the gates that invite alike the feet of prince and beggar—Whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

But by these twelve gates St. John never meant that there are as many different ways of getting into Heaven. This portion of sacred Scripture is a figure. It is to be understood within limits; and is no more to be pushed too far than many of our Lord's parables.

There is but one way to the kingdom of God—to a state of grace in this world, and a state of glory in the next. I, says Jesus, am the way, the truth, the life; not one of many ways, but the one way. Come unto *me*, He also says, all ye that labor and are heavy laden,

and *I* will give you rest; and in perfect harmony with these declarations is that of an apostle, "There is no name given under Heaven whereby man can be saved but the name of Jesus." There is but one true religion "pure and undefiled before God."

MAN WITH THE WITHERED HAND.

It is a Sabbath morning; and, its doors thrown open as the hour of worship approaches, the synagogue begins to fill.

Among those who enter is a man with a withered hand; and, however others come, there is haste in his step and high expectation seated on his brow.

Blessed day, now is his chance to be healed.

Jesus is in the neighborhood, and is sure to be at worship. Early there, likely the first, this crippled man, heeding nothing else, looking at none, talking with none, keeps his eye on the door—keenly observing all who enter, and often, as it opens and Christ appears not, disappointed.

At length the feet of a group are heard; again the door opens; and the color that flushes into his face tells that the person has now come whom he has come to meet. Nor is this all he can do, and does. Observing where Jesus, attended by His disciples, sits, he rises, and, elbowing the crowd aside, without regard to their chal-

lenge or murmurs, pushes on to place himself before the Savior,—right in His eye.

All this he can do, and does, and more.

Ordinarily concealing a deformity he was ashamed of, he now drops his robe, and, exposing the poor unsightly hand in the hope that it may catch Christ's eye and move His pity, sits with looks fixed imploringly on our Lord. There was no need for him to speak. His eager looks and the poor, bared, withered hand were touching prayers. Nor did these prayers wait long for an answer.

The eye, that never saw misery but to pity it, is at length turned on him ; and Jesus says,

"Stretch out thine hand !"

Strange command to others, perhaps also to himself —as bidding him do the very thing that he had no power to do. Still he tries it.

Again doing what he can, he makes an effort—and, Glory to God ! bursting from his lips, succeeds.

Virtue goes out of Christ. The shrunken hand instantly acquires a healthful color, and swells into its right proportions.

In his joy the man shuts and opens it ; moves the pliant fingers ; and holds the miracle aloft to the gaze of a crowd, dumb with astonishment.

Give him a harp, and with that hand he would sweep its sounding strings to the praise of Jesus. Pattern to men who have souls to be saved, and hearts to cure, he did what he could—using all means within his power to obtain the blessing.

And, did people, with equal eagerness, repair to the church on Sabbath, as he to the synagogue, to meet

Jesus Christ, and with the same earnestness and the same faith, lay out their sins and soul's sorrows before Him, our Sabbaths would witness greater works than this—He, who healed that withered hand, healing withered hearts, and, whether they required to be saved or sanctified, giving power to them that have no might.

MOSES.

Now, the best evidence we have of what God can and will do is what He has already done. This was the source of Moses' confidence when he left the land of Midian to conquer the power of Egypt, and bring Israel out of the house of bondage.

"Behold," he said to God, when first called to undertake the task—"behold, the people will not believe that I am able to deliver them."

"What is that in thine hand?" said the voice from amidst the burning bush.

"A rod," was his reply.

"Cast it on the ground," said the voice.

He did it; and springs back with sudden terror—surprise, fear, horror, in his countenance, for there as erpent, with head erect, and eyes of fire, and cleft, quivering tongue, is hissing at him.

Once more the voice sounds out from the bush,

"Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail."

Recovering from his panic, he boldly seizes the writh-

ing reptile; and now its cold, scaly form is no sooner within his grasp than, like many things else which become harmless in the hand of faith, the venomed creature stiffens into a shepherd's rod.

His confidence established on a firm foundation, Moses hesitates no longer. Entrusting his wife and children to her father's care, and leaving others to feed his flocks on the hills of Midian, he enters boldly on his mission.

Repairing to his countrymen he tells them his errand. The rod is his credentials. It shall speak for him. Assured that what God has once done He can do again, he bids them look. His answer to such, as question or doubt his authority, is a shepherd's rod, which, flung from his hand, no sooner touches the ground, than it changes to a living serpent.

For a contrast, look at Moses—the feelings with which he undertook, and the manner in which he executed his commission to deliver Israel from Pharoah and the house of bondage. What a remarkable and happy contrast his case to Peter's! Strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, he forced his way into the palace, and bore himself before the king with undaunted courage—demanding the liberties of his countrymen.

Single handed and alone, he stuck by his purpose, and carried it over what seemed insuperable difficulties. Without arms he undertook to conquer armies; to cross the sea without ships; and in a journey extending over many years, to carry a mighty host safely through a desert where there was neither water to quench their thirst, nor bread to satisfy their hunger.

All this, and much more than this, Moses did; nor closed his eyes in death till he saw the longest, grandest march men ever made, brought to a triumphant issue on the borders of the Promised Land.

But Peter's enterprise and his were not more different in their conclusion than in their commencement. Self-confident, rash, vain, impulsive, the fisherman of Galilee rushed on the perils of the deep; while Moses, a man more highly endowed by nature and cultivated by education, shrunk from the task assigned him; declined the post of honor; and, overwhelmed by a sense of his own weakness and inadequacy, even remonstrated with God, saying,

"Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh?"

Nor till the Lord's anger was actually kindled against him, as he stood there, stating one objection after another, did he venture to undertake the task. He went to it, not in his own strength, but in the might of God. He looked for counsel and courage, for faith, patience, and success.

And He who did not fail Moses, will never fail any that put their trust in Him.

The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; He is their strength in the time of trouble; the Lord shall help them and deliver them, and save them because they trust in Him.

Our confidence in God's ability to save and help us, the bold prayer of faith, "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the ancient days, in the days of old," rests on this sure foundation, that God is the same yesterday, to-day and forever.

Moses, when he led Israel out of Egypt,—their house of bondage,—had reached the fourscore years that David says prove to the few who attain such an age, but labor and sorrow.

For forty years thereafter he guides their wanderings through the desert, till, way-worn and weary, they reach the welcome borders of the Promised Land. They are to enter it; but not he, though ere his eyes close in death he is to see it. For this purpose he is directed to climb the heights of Pisgah—a lofty mountain in Moab, whose top affords the spectator a wide though distant view of Palestine.

But should our imagination picture Moses as an aged man, stooping under the weight of years as, with many a breathing pause, he slowly takes his step up the steep, till, arrived at the summit, he falls exhausted on the ground or leans panting on his staff, and, while the mountain-breeze plays with his thin, gray locks, strains his old eyes on the valleys of Canaan that stretch away to the horizon beyond the silver line of Jordan and gloomy waters of the Dead Sea; should we imagiue this, our fancy were wide of the mark.

Moses was now one hundred and twenty years old; yet he climbed the heights and stood on the top of Pisgah, with an eye as bright, an arm as strong, a foot as fleet, a bearing as erect and manly as when, forty years before, he bearded the lion in his den—the tyrant in his palace, and, boldly stepping into Pharaoh's hall, said, "Thus saith the Lord. . . Let my people go!" In the words of the wondrous story, "his eye was not dim, neither was his natural strength abated."

But in this Moses presented a singular exception to the common fate of men. A few years, and cares and sorrows write their wrinkles on men's brow; time sheds its snows on raven locks; the wheels of life get clogged with growing infirmities; manly strength turns into weakness, and wisdom, perhaps, into the drivelling of second childhood. And even where the power men possessed was, as it must necessarily have been in Moses' case, preternatural and miraculous, still the old adage holds true—"Times change and we change with them."

ABRAHAM.

"TAKE now thy son, thy only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering on a mountain which I will tell thee of," was the command of God laid on Abraham, the trial to which He put His servant's faith; and how did its every sentence quiver like an arrow, go like a knife into the old man's heart?

Was it easy for a father to brace up his nerve to such a deed; to look on the beloved youth, the innocent and unsuspecting victim, for those three dreadful days they traveled together to the dreadful spot; to lay the wood on Isaac that, kindled by a father's hand, was to consume his son to ashes; to meet that natural but terrible question,

"My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

And when the fell purpose could be concealed no

longer, and the dreaded hour at length had come when Abraham must raise the veil, was it easy to look on Isaac's horror and resist his entreaties, and hear his agonizing cries? or even witness his resignation as, moved by his father's grief, and pitying him more than himself, he stretched his body on the altar, saying, "Father, not my will, but thine be done?"

And when, with trembling hands, the old man wound the cords around his limbs, and felt them tremble, had it not been easier to be the child than the father, the victim than the priest at such a sacrifice?

One stroke of the knife and Isaac's woes are past; but if he does not rise like a phœnix from his ashes, what a return to his home awaits Abraham! what a meeting with the mother? what a future to the poor old man! His heart is broken, and his gray hairs go down with sorrow to the grave.

JORAM.

AHAB and Jezebel, two of the worst characters in sacred story, had a son; and with such blood as theirs in his veins, no wonder that Joram, on succeeding to the throne of one parent, exhibited the vices of both.

His mother does not seem to have had a drop of human kindness in her heart. Yet he was not altogether dead to humanity, as appears by an incident which occurred during the siege that reduced his capital to the direst extremities.

The ghastly aspect of a famished woman who throws herself in his way with a wild, impassioned, wailing cry of, "Help, my lord, O King!" touches him; and he asks, "What aileth thee?"

Stretching out a skinny arm to one, pale and haggard as herself, she replies, with hollow voice, "This woman said unto me, 'Give thy son, that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow.' So we boiled my son, and did eat him; and I said unto her on the next day, 'Give thy son, that we may eat him'; and she hath hid her son." Struck with horror at the story, Joram rent his clothes. He had pity, but no piety.

"Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will but revolt more and more." Never were these words, never was the fact that unsanctified afflictions have the same hardening effect on men which fire, that melts gold, has on clay, more strikingly illustrated than on this occasion. So far from rending his heart with his garment, and humbling himself before the Lord, Joram flares up into fiercer rebellion; and, turning from these victims of the famine to his courtiers, he grinds his teeth to profane God's name, and vows vengeance on his prophet, saying, "God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha, the son of Shaphat, shall stand on him this day."

Impotent rage against the only man who could have weathered the storm and saved the stale! The prophet's head stood on his shoulders when that of this son of a murderer—as Elisha called him—lay low in death in the dust of Naboth's vineyard. The day arrives which sees the cup of Joram's iniquity full, and that of God's patience empty—drained to the last drop.

JEHU.

LAUNCHED like a thunderbolt at the house of Ahab, Jehu makes right for Jezreel with impetuous, impatient speed. A watchman on the palace tower catches afar the dust of the advancing cavalcade, and cries, "I see a company!"

Guilt, which sleeps uneasy even on downy pillows, awakens, on the circumstance being reported to him; the monarch's fears.

A horseman is quickly dispatched with the question, "Is it peace?" Thus, pulling up his steed, he accosts the leader of the company, who, drawing no rein, replies, in a tone neither to be challenged nor disobeyed,

"What hast thou to do with peace? Get thee behind me!"

Failing the first's return, a second horseman gallops forth to carry the same question and meet the same reception.

Sweeping on like a hurricane, the band is now near enough for the watchman to tell, "He came near unto them, and cometh not again;" and also to add, as he marks how the leader is shaking the reins and lashing the steeds of his bounding chariot, "The driving is like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously."

Displaying a courage that seemed his only redeeming quality, or bereaved of sense, according to the saying, "Whom God intends to destroy, He first makes mad," Joram instantly throws himself into his chariot, advances to meet the band, and demands of its leader, "Is it peace, Jehu?"

"What peace," is the other's answer, "so long as the whoredoms of thy mother and her witchcrafts are so many?"

With the words that leave his lips an arrow leaves his bow to transfix the flying king—entering in at his back and passing out at his breast; and when he is cast, a bloody corpse, into Naboth's vineyard, and dogs are crunching his mother's bones, and Jehu has climbed the throne, and Elisha walks abroad with his head safe on his shoulders, and the curtain falls on the stage of these tragic and righteous scenes, it was a time for the few pious men of that guilty land to sing, "Lo thine enemies, O Lord, lo thine enemies shall perish; but the righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree; they shall grow like a cedar of Lebanon." Such was the mission of Jehu.

THIEF ON THE CROSS.

TAKE two instances.

Look at the thief on the cross. It is from the very edge of the pit, just as he is going over, that the mighty hand of Jesus plucks him. Who, that heard that robber, with his fellow and the base crowd, insult a dying Savior, who, that saw him nailed to his cross, a daring, despairing, hardened ruffian, could have believed it possible that a few hours thereafter he would be singing songs in Paradise? Yet the sun of that day had not set behind Judah's hills ere a blaspheming wretch, ripe for hell, was

converted, saved, and sanctified; and had taken his flight to Heaven to tell to listening angels what mercy had done for him—how Christ had saved him at the uttermost.

ST. PAUL.

Look also at Paul. The old bed of the sea laid bare for the foot of Israel, the dry rock changed into a gushing fountain, the rotting tenant of the tomb rising at Christ's word, to appear, once divested of the grave clothes, with life sparkling in his eye and health blooming on his rosy cheek, did not attest God's power over dead matter more plainly than Paul's conversion attests His power over a depraved heart.

What more incredible than that yonder man who, with a fierceness, a firmness of purpose, and an intensity of hatred, uncommon to the ingenious years of youth, stands glutting his eyes with Stephen's blood, would ere long be Christ's greatest and most devoted apostle; and would die, after a life of unparalleled sufferings, a martyr in the very cause for which he shed the first martyr's blood? Yet so it was.

Is anything too hard for Me? saith the Lord; in other and fuller words—is any heart too hard for Me to break; any sin too great for Me to pardon; any passions too strong for Me to bind; any habits too old for Me to change; any prayer too great for Me to answer; or any wants too many for Me to supply?

The blessed lesson such cases teach us is this, that

however great the difficulties, or deep the sorrows, or strong the temptations, or arduous the duties of His people, His grace, as He promises, shall be sufficient for them. And so they may use the highest and yet the humblest, the bravest though by no means boastful saying that ever fell from mortal lips—"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Like some of old, does he say, I am for St. Paul, not for St. James? St. Paul is not for him. I can fancy that apostle, in horror, rending the garment he wears in Heaven; repudiating the connection. One in glory before the throne, he and St. James are one in sentiment in this Bible.

St. Paul, indeed, counted all things loss for Christ. He held the Cross aloft; and, shaking that banner from its folds in the face of friend and foe, he waved it over the scaffold where his testimony was sealed with his blood. But the faith he preached was a faith that worketh—worketh by love; crucifieth the flesh; purifieth the heart; and overcometh the world.

Mark his last words to the Christians of a city in whose dungeons he had sung Christ's praises, and whose jailer he had conducted to Christ's feet:

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Fear to die? The apostle knew in whom he had believed. He was persuaded that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, should be able to

separate him from the love of God which was through Jesus Christ. He had a full assurance that the blessed Master whom he had lived, and was about to die, to serve, would receive him to His glorious rest.

Never bond-slave longed for emancipation, or pining captive for green fields and home, or soldier, weary of war for his discharge, or weather-beaten mariner, as he lay on the helm battling with rude seas and roaring tempests, for a quiet harbor, more than Paul for death; to depart and be with Jesus.

And since it is at death the servant, having ended his task, receives his wages; the soldier, having closed the battles, receives his crown; the pilgrim, having finished his journey, is welcomed to his Father's house, and enters into rest; how much more common were the hopes and peace and triumph of Paul, did Christians labor more diligently to make their calling and election sure. Many more might die offering in the manner of their death the greatest sermon that was ever preached, the grandest spectacle that can be seen on earth. Peace enjoyed amid such terrors and distractions is a spectacle to turn aside the steps of Moses. Here is a bush burning, yet not consumed.

It was a sight worth seeing, when the young shepherd stood by the giant's vast form, with his foot planted on his neck, and mothers and maidens, conducting him from the field of a glorious victory, sang his praises to the timbrel and the dance; but it is a spectacle more glorious still to see a dying saint treading death and the devil beneath his feet, in the sublime power of faith conquering all mortal and guilty fears, calmly awaiting the hour

of departure, comforting the mourners who weep around his bed, and with a placid smile bidding the world adieu. Amid such scenes faith achieves her grandest triumphs. There, the infidel has felt compelled to do her homage; and has been heard to say, on leaving the field of such a victory, "May I die the death of the righteous, and may my last end be like his!"

It was not thus, as some have done, that Paul spoke of good works. It may be news to many, yet it is true, that he applies the same lofty terms to them which he uses to proclaim and enforce salvation by the blood of Christ.

To Timothy he says, "*This is a faithful saying*, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" and to Titus he says, employing not an equivalent, but the identical expression, "*This is a faithful saying*, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works."

On death-beds, on the deck, wherever loved ones tear themselves from each other's arms, at all partings, the last are not the least important words; and it is with exhortations to good works that Paul takes farewell of the church of Philippi. "Finally, brethren," he says, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Elsewhere, placing good works on a yet loftier platform, in language the strongest possible according them

yet higher honors, he says, "God is *not unrighteous* to forget our work of labor and love showed toward His name;" and after that it were surely no presumption to say that it cannot be wrong for us modestly to remember what God will not forget; and further still, that it cannot be right for us to be careless of such works as this great preacher of faith says are ordained of God, and bids us be careful to maintain.

Come, for example, into this workshop of Corinth, where Paul is spinning cordage, or sewing a covering, or, axe in hand, fashioning a pole, or otherwise busy tent making.

Finding the great Apostle of the Gentiles employed in such secularities, one is tempted to address him in God's words to the prophet, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" Is this a place, or that an employment for such a man as Paul? And yet, though, all fashioned alike, made of the same materials, and sold in the same market, there is no apparent difference between his tents and those of others; whether Paul work with axe or needle, the hours he spends in tent-making are sanctified—are spent in the work of the Lord. He asserts a minister's just claim to maintenance, and yet earns his bread with the sweat of his brow, forgetting his rights that the ministry be not hindered.

Acting from the noblest motives and for such an end, Paul gives a religious character to a common employment; and the needle of the tent-maker neither demeans nor dishonors the hand that waved tumultuous assemblies into silence, and won the honors of a martyr's crown.

"Whether I eat or drink," he said, "or whatsoever

I do—go to a feast, or a funeral ; make tents, or sermons ; go to the market to sell my work for money, or to the church to sell Christ's free salvation without money or price ; earn my bread with the sweat of my brow, or accept the hospitality of Gaius, mine host ; make tents at Corinth, or fight with wild beasts at Ephesus ; escape from Damascus in a basket, or, brought to bay, stand like a lion before Nero at Rome,—I do all to the glory of God!"

Doing so, all he did, and doing all we do, may be appropriately called the work of the Lord.

ST. PETER.

Such is the help which His people have in their God ; and this furnishes the key to the strange paradox of Paul, "When I am weak, then I am strong"—in other and, apparently, self-contradictory words, when I am weak then I am not weak ; when I am *not* strong, then I *am* strong.

Peter's history, and that of many others besides, supplies a remarkable illustration of the reverse proposition, this, namely, When I am strong, then am I weak.

Let us look at it. So strong was Simon in his own vain judgment that instead of waiting till Christ invited him to walk on the water, he volunteered to make the bold attempt. Addressing his Master as, stepping with

Godlike majesty from billow to billow, He approached their boat, Peter said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water."

To drown not him, but his vanity, and mortify the conceit and presumption which was his besetting sin, our Lord acceded to Peter's request, saying, "Come."

The permission is no sooner granted than, probably without a prayer for Divine help, and certainly with more rashness than genuine courage, he leaps from the boat. The water bears him up; he walks the rolling billows—yet, ere he rejoins his companions, how effectually is he taught that when a man is strong, then he is weak? He began to build without counting the cost; and the only result is a house which, unfinished and unfurnished, remains the inglorious monument of his pride and poverty. Its terror, increased by the gloom of night, the storm raves and roars, and the waves rushing on with foaming crests threaten to engulf him, and avenge themselves on the puny mortal who has dared to defy their power. His situation is novel and alarming. A panic seizes him; his courage melts like a snow-flake on the water; he feels the waves opening beneath his feet; he sinks, deeper and deeper he sinks, till this rash adventurer, who would walk the sea, the rival of his Master and the envy of his fellows, raises his drowning head to throw out his arms and cry, "Lord, save me!"

As has often happened, where there was more than life at stake, and in scenes less picturesque, or public, Jesus hastens to the rescue. "a refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble;" and, upheld by the arm that upholds the universe, Peter is borne back

to his companions, who receive him into the boat, pale, half-drowned, trembling with abject terror—a warning and very memorable illustration of the saying, "Pride goeth before a fall."

SAMSON.

TAKE these two examples in illustration of that remark. First, the case of Samson, whose great strength saved his country from oppression, and struck terror into the boldest of his enemies. A lion meets him, and, taking it by the jaws, he rends it like a young kid, asunder; sure of their prey, they shut him up in Gaza, and he wrenches off its ponderous gates, and, bearing them to a neighboring hill-top, laughs his enemies to scorn; catching him to a disadvantage, the Philistines beset him, and, for lack of sword or battle-axe, seizing a jaw-bone that lies at his hand, he throws himself on their serried ranks, and, cutting down a man at every blow, leaves a thousand dead on the field. Yet see—his long locks lying on Delilah's floor, and the harlot that betrayed him counting her ill-earned gains—Samson is led away bound, the laughing-stock of women and children. Now a poor, blinded prisoner, making sport to the Philistines, how are the mighty fallen!—his hand is shortened that it cannot save.

NEHEMIAH.

WHO ponders the apostle's words aright, and forms a proper estimate of their importance, will be less sur-

prised than some, no doubt, are at the manner in which Nehemiah mentions his good works in his prayers.

Addressing God, he speaks of them in a way which many good men never ventured on. When counselled to fly, he spurned the coward advice; and, asking, "Shall such a man as I flee? against the enemies of his God, his faith, his country, and his countrymen"—

> stood like an iron pillar strong
> And steadfast as a wall of brass.

But some who admire the boldness with which, amid a crowd of enemies, he faces man, may think his bearing before God over bold; and that he trode the borders of presumption—when, relating his pious and patriotic deeds, he addresses Jehovah, saying,

"Wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof!"

Did such a thought occur to them when engaged in prayer, many would strangle it in their hearts—regarding it as a suggestion of the devil; a temptation to be resisted, if not a sin to be mourned; as only suited to the lips of one who distributed his alms to the sound of a trumpet, and prayed in corners of the street that he might be praised of men, and said, expressing the sentiments of a heart inflated with pride, "I thank thee, O God, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican!" Yet, when Nehemiah prayed, "Remember me, O God, concerning this," he only asked Him to remember what Paul assures us God is not so unrighteous as to forget.

He was no proud, self-righteous Pharisee. A most

devout, humble, and holy man, he confessed his own and his people's sins—praying, fasting, weeping, and, while he asks his good works to be remembered, throwing himself at God's feet to cry, "Spare me according to the greatness of Thy mercy!" What a fine example of a true Christian—the humble believer, yet the diligent worker!

The truth is, that to set little store on good works is an immoral and most pestilent heresy. The works by which we recommend religion and adorn the doctrine of God our Savior, the works which spring from love to Christ and aim at the glory of God, the works by which a good man blesses society and leaves the world better than he found it, are not the "filthy rags" of Holy Scripture.

No filthy rags, but the gracious and graceful ornaments of a blood-bought Church; these, on the contrary, are the "gold of Ophir," "the raiment of needle-work" in which His bride, apparelled as a queen, stands at her Lord's right hand—a lovely form, in a blaze of beauty and of jewels.

JOB.

In Old Testament times Christianity was in the opening bud; now it is in the full-blown flower. Sustained then by types and symbols, it was the eaglet when the mother stirs her nest and bears it on her wings; now a full-feathered eagle with her foot on the rock, and her far-piercing eye on the sun, she springs upward to cleave

the parting clouds and soar high above them. Still, though without our advantages, these Old Testament saints present remarkable instances, among other graces, of resignation; and, as we see the trees in early spring, living, standing—though autumn blasts and winter frosts have stripped off all their leaves—we see in these patriarchs how stoutly faith in God can stand when trials have robbed life of every green joy, and the days come, of which he says, "I have no pleasure in them," the poor sufferer would be happy with his head beneath the sod, to sleep where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

What an illustrious example of this was Job, when deep answered unto deep at the noise of God's waterspouts! Billow after billow went over him; he goes down, never, as it seemed, to rise again; but faith cannot down, and how wonderful to see his head emerge, and, as he looks around on the desolation, fortune and family engulfed, to hear him say, "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord;" or, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

"He has slain mine, my sons, my daughters, my joys and hopes, all are dead and gone; now let Him slay not mine, but me also, yet will I trust in Him."

What faith! What sublime resignation!

And would we, now suffering under trials, bear them, or, having to suffer, would we meet them with like submission, we must learn to yield to, not to resist, God's will.

PAUL.

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."—Colossians i. 12.

THE inspired writers, in setting forth salvation, adopt sometimes the one course, and sometimes the other.

With Paul, for instance, the subject of Heaven now introduces Christ, and now from Christ, the apostle turns to expatiate on the joys of Heaven.

Here, as on an angel's wing that sheds light on every step, we see Him ascending, and there descending the ladder. Taking flight from the cross, He soars upward to the crown; and now, like an eagle sweeping down from the bosom of a golden cloud, He leaves the throne of the Redeemer to alight on the heights of Calvary.

As an example of the ascending method, we have that well-known passage in his epistle to the Romans—"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren; moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

There we pass from the root to the fruit, from the cause, step by step, to its effects; here again, Paul guides us upward along the stream of blessings to their perennial fountain. He first shows the precious gift, and then reveals the gracious giver; the purchase first, and afterward the divine Purchaser.

From the crown of glory, flashing on the brow of a

Magdalene, He turns our dazzled eyes to another crown, a trophy hung upon a cross ; a wreath of thorns, armed with long sharp spikes—each, in place of a pearly gem, tipped with a drop of blood.

He first introduces us to Heaven as our inalienable heritage, and then to the throne and person of Him who won Heaven for us. He conducts us up to Jesus, that we may fall at His feet with adoring gratitude, and join in spirit the saintly throng who dwell in the full fruition of His presence, and praise Him throughout eternity.

The first and most notable champion who appeared on the field was the apostle Paul ; and as, panoplied from head to heel in the armor of God, he stalks into the arena, and, looking undaunted around him, is ready to fight and to die for the truth, observe the motto on his battle-shield :

"I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

It is not simply Jesus Christ ; though given by an angel and full of meaning, that was a great name. Nor is it Christ come, nor Christ coming, nor even Christ crowned ; but Christ dying on a cross, "Christ, and Him crucified."

Life to sinners through a Savior's death, salvation by substitution, redemption through blood—that blood the ransom and Jesus the Redeemer—was the substance of all Paul's sermons, the theme of his praise, the deepest-rooted and most cherished hopes of his heart.

He lived and died in that faith ; and, though that tongue of power and eloquence be now silent in the

grave, he proclaims to listening angels in Heaven what he preached to men on earth.

He proclaims it, not in sermons, but in songs; for in that serene and better world, where no storms disturb the church, nor controversies rage, nor clouds obscure the light, they sing, salvation by the blood of Christ.

May we cast away all other hope!—and, with our whole hearts embracing that, we shall one day join the vast congregation whose voices fell on John's ear as the sound of many waters, while in harmonious numbers and to golden harps they sang before the throne, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

Compared with our Lord Jesus Christ, see how much Paul did in actually revealing the will of God to men. Jesus preached three years, but Paul thirty. Jesus preached only to Jews, but Paul to Jew, and Greek, and Roman, Parthian, Scythian, Barbarian, bond and free. Jesus numbered His converts by hundreds, Paul his by thousands. Jesus confined His labors to the narrow limits of Palestine; Paul overleaped all such bounds, he took the wide earth for his field, and flying, as on angel's wings, he preached the Gospel alike to the bearded Jew, the barbarians of Melita, the philosophers of Athens, and in the streets and palaces of Rome, to the conquerors of the world.

Yet look at this great apostle; he lies as low at Jesus feet as the woman who washed them with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. He wore chains for Christ, and gloried in them; nor was ever queen so proud of her diamond coronet, nor man in office of his

chain of gold, as he of the iron manacles he wore for Christ, and boldly shook in the face of kings.

To serve the cause of Jesus, he could submit to be beaten, and scourged, and starved, and stoned, and cast at Epheus to hungry lions; but one thing he could not bear—grief and horror seize him when he finds himself set on a level with his Master.

To a divided church, rent by factions and full of partisanship, where one is crying, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, and a third, I am of Cephas, and a fourth, I am of Christ, he turns round with indignation, to ask, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptised in the name of Paul?"

In whatever others may glory, he ascribes all the glory of redemption to the cross of Christ, and, rebuking that party spirit and respect for human authority, which is still too prevalent among us, he exclaims, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

An example also of discordancy, but with mind towering aloft over matter, what a noble contrast does Paul present to Samson!

There is nothing in the outward man to attract the gazer's eye. According to ancient tradition, he was a poor, mean-looking figure. His presence, said his enemies, is weak, and his speech contemptible. But put his parchments before him, put a pen in his hand, and, higher than the bird ever flew from whose wing it dropped, he soars away into a heaven of thought, or, coming down with an eagle's swoop, descends further than any man before or since, into the deepest depths of gospel

mysteries. Or, give him liberty of speech; place him on Mars' Hill to expound his despised faith, or let him stand on his defence at the bar of kings, like a lion at bay.

Indifference gives place to interest, contempt changes into admiration, the audience is hushed, and, amid breathless silence, he sways the multitude with a master's hand, his puny form seeming to rise to a giant's stature. He seizes error, and rends it, as Samson rent the lion; he lays these arms of his on the colossal pillars of Time's oldest superstitions, shakes the hoary fabric, and pulls it down into the dust, burying gods and goddesses in one common ruin.

JESUS.

Let us inquire in what character Jesus holds this kingdom. It is not as God, nor as man, He holds it; but as both God and man, Mediator of the New Covenant, the monarch of a new kingdom. What He was on earth He is still in Heaven—God and man for ever.

Our Lord appeared in both these characters by the grave of Lazarus.

"Jesus wept."

Brief but blessed record! These were precious tears.

The passing air kissed them from His cheek, or they were drunk up by the earth, or they glistened but a little, like dew-drops on some lowly flower; yet assuring us of His sympathy in our hours of sorrow, their memory has been healing balm to many a bleeding heart.

Weeping, His bosom rent with grief, He stands revealed—bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh—a brother born for adversity, for the bitter hour of household deaths, to impart strength to the arms that lay the dead in the coffin, or slowly lower them into the tomb.

Yet, mark how, by the same grave, He stands revealed in another character, with His divine majesty plainly unveiled. To weep for the dead may be weakness, but to raise the dead is power.

Like the clear, shining after rain, when every tree seems hung with quivering leaves of light, and the heath of the moor sparkles, and gleams, and burns with the clanging hues of countless diamonds, see how, after that shower of tears, the sun of Christ's Godhead bursts forth on the scene, and He appears, the brightness of His Father's glory.

Men have wept with Him; but there, where He stands face to face with grim death, let both, men and angels worship Him. Death cowers before His eye. He puts off the man, and stands out the God; and the wonder of the dead brought to life is lost in the higher wonder of one who could weep as a man, and yet work as a God.

On the Sea of Galilee also, our Lord appears in both characters. The son of Mary sleeps. His nights have been spent in prayer, and his days in preaching, healing, incessant works of benevolence—He has been teaching us how we also should go about doing good—He has been practically rebuking those whose days are wasted in ease and idleness, or whose evenings, not calm like nature's,

but passed amid the whirl of excitement, or in guilty pleasures, sweet slumbers refuse to bless.

Now, wearied out with labor, the son of Mary sleeps. There is no sleeping draught, no potion of the apothecary that can impart such deep, refreshing slumbers as a good conscience and a busy day's good work.

Proof of that, stretched on His bare, hard couch, Jesus sleeps—amid the howling of the wind, the dash and roar of stormy billows, He sleeps as soundly as ever slept a babe in its mother's arms.

He lay down, a weary man; but see how He rises, at the call of His disciples, to do the work of a God.

On awakening, He found the elements in the wildest uproar, the waves were chasing each other over the deep, the heavens were sounding their loudest thunders, the lightnings were playing among the clouds, and the winds, let loose, were holding free revelry in the racked, tormented air.

As I have seen a master, speaking with low and gentle voice, hush the riotous school into instant silence, so Jesus spake. Raising His hand, and addressing the rude storm, He said:

"Peace, be still."

The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. No sooner, amid the loudest din, does nature catch the well-known sound of her master's voice, than the tumult subsides; in an instant all is quiet; and, with a heave as gentle as an infant's bosom, and all heaven's starry glory mirrored in its crystal depths, the Sea of Galilee lies around that boat—a beautiful picture of the happy bosom into which Heaven and its peace have descended.

"Justified by faith," purchased by the blood of Christ, and blessed with His presence, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, those two natures which our Lord thus revealed on earth, He retains in Heaven. And as both, God and man, He occupies the throne of Grace, and the throne of Providence—holding under His dominion all worlds, and principalities, and powers; for, in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and He has been made Head over all things to the church. This must be so. He *got* the kingdom; and, simply as God, there could be no addition made to his possessions.

Simply as God, He could get nothing, because all things were already His. You cannot add to the length of eternity; nor extend the measure of infinity; nor make absolute perfection more perfect; nor add one drop to a cup, nor even to an ocean, already full.

And as, on the one hand, our Lord did not get this kingdom simply as God, neither, on the other hand, did He receive it simply as man.

To suppose so, were to entertain an idea more absurd, more improbable, more impossible, than the fable of Atlas, who, according to wild heathen legends, bore the world on his giant shoulders. How could an arm that once hung around a mother's neck sustain even this world?

But He, who lay in the feebleness of infancy on Mary's bosom, and rested, a wayworn and weary man on Jacob's well, and, faint with loss of blood, sank in the streets of Jerusalem beneath the burden of a cross, now sustains the weight of this and of a thousand worlds besides.

It is told as an extraordinary thing of the first and greatest of all the Cæsars, that such were his capacious mind, his mighty faculties, and his marvelous command of them, that he could at once keep six pens running to his dictation on as many different subjects. This may or may not be true; but were Jesus Christ a mere man, in the name even of reason, how could He guard the interests, and manage the affairs of a people, scattered far and wide over the face of the habitable globe?

What heart were large enough to embrace them all; what eyes could see them all; what ears could hear them all? Think of the ten thousand prayers pronounced in a hundred different tongues that go up at once, and altogether, to his ear!

Yet there is no confusion; none are lost; none missed in the crowd. Nor are they heard by Him as, standing on yonder lofty crag, we hear the din of the city stretched out far beneath us, with all its separate sounds of cries, and rumbling wheels, and human voices, mixed up into one deep, confused, hollow roar—like the boom of the sea's distant breakers. No; every believer may feel as if he were alone with God—enjoying a private audience of the king in his presence-chamber. Be of good cheer. Every groan of thy wounded heart, thy every sigh, and cry, and prayer, falls as distinctly on Jesus' ear as if you stood beside the throne, or, nearer still, lay with John in His bosom, and felt the beating of His heart against your own.

Jesus Christ, God and man for ever, what a grand and glorious truth! How full of encouragement and comfort to those, like us, who have sins to confess, sorrows to tell

Him, and many a heavy care to cast upon His sympathy and kindness. Since Mary kissed His blessed feet, since Lazarus' tomb moved His ready tears, since Peter's cry brought Him quick to the rescue, since John's head lay pillowed on His gentle bosom, since a mother's sorrows were felt and cared for amid the bitter agonies of His dying hour, He has changed His place, but not His heart. True man and Almighty God—God and man for ever—believer, let Him sustain thy cares. Thy case cannot be too difficult, nor thy burden too heavy for One who guides the rolling planets on their course, and bears on His unwearied arm the weight of a universe.

Christ does not redeem us, as some say, by simply revealing the truth—save us by merely, as a prophet, showing the way of salvation.

The pathways on the deep, along our rugged coasts, as well as our streets, are lighted ; and yonder, where the waters fret, and foam, and break above the sunken rock, the tall light-house rises. Kindled at sundown, it shines steady and clear through the gloom of night, warning the seaman at the wheel, of the danger he has to avoid, and showing him the course he has to steer. Now, he who reared that house and kindled its blessed light, and thus saves many a bark from shipwreck, many a sailor from a watery grave, may be called a saviour.

In one sense he is a saviour of all who, bravely ploughing their way through the black midnight over the stormy deep, hail that light as it rises on them like a star of hope—and, seeing it, know how to steer, to take the roads, to clear the bar, to beware the reef, and bring their bark in safety o the desired haven.

But if Christ is a Savior only in that sense simply because He brought life and immortality to light, then He is not the only Savior.

From the "Sun of Righteousness" He changes into a star, and in that heaven, where He shone without a rival, He takes His place but among the luminaries of the church; one of many, He is only a pure, and bright, and beautiful star, in that brilliant constellation, which is formed of Moses, the prophets—those seers, and sages, and inspired apostles, by whose voices and pens, in the days of old, God communicated His will to man.

Many of those, indeed, who were inspired to reveal the will of God for the salvation of men, had more to do, instrumentally, in revealing that will than Jesus Christ. No book bears His name; He wrote no epistle, and the the truths that actually dropped from His lips, so far as they are recorded, form but an insignificant portion of those Holy Scriptures which are our chart and charter. Yet, who but He is set forth as *the* Redeemer and Savior of sinners? Where is Moses represented as such? or David? or Isaiah? or Paul? Where is it said, "Believe on Paul, and thou shalt be saved? whosoever believeth on Paul or Peter hath everlasting life and shall never perish?"

To think that the same arm which rolled back the gates of the sea, aud stopped the wheels of the sun, for us, hung in feeble infancy around a mother's neck; that the same voice which spake in Sinai's rolling thunders, for us, wailed feebly on Mary's bosom, and cried on the cross, "I thirst"; that the same august being who delivered the law amid the majesty of Heaven, for us, died

to fulfill it amid the deepest ignominies of earth; that He, before whom Moses did exceedingly fear and quake, and Joshua fell, and the holy prophet fainted, was that very same Jesus whose gentle manners won the confidence of childhood, and whose kind eye beamed forgiveness on a poor, frail, fallen woman, as she stooped to wash His feet with tears, and wipe them with the hair of her head; these things should exalt Jesus higher in our esteem, and endear Him more and more to our hearts.

What a combination of grandest majesty, and most gentle mercy shines in this visible "Image of the invisible God!" Surely He is worthy of your acceptance, and reverence, and love!

Who is this, that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this, that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? He comes; hell flees His presence. He appears; all the angels of God worship Him. He speaks; the tempestuous sea is calm. He commands; the grave gives up its dead. He stands on this sin-smitten world, "in praises, doing wonders;" the visible image of an invisible God.

Angels celebrate His advent, and attend His departure—hovering alike over the manger of Bethlehem, and the crest of Olivet; and when He has left the grave to ascend the throne, hark to the cry at the gate of Heaven, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.' Within, they ask, "Who is this King of Glory?" The gate rolls open, and, greeted with shout and song, the procession enters, as His escort answers, "The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory."

With such honors and gladness, may He be received into our hearts! Holy Spirit, throw open their gates! Jesus, ascend their throne! that, holding Thee, whom Heaven holds, we may have a heaven within us; and, washed in Thy blood and renewed by Thy Spirit, may present in ourselves—what sin has forfeited, but grace restores—a visible image of the invisible God.

In His incarnate Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, God presents Himself to me in a form which meets my wants. The Infinite is brought within the limits of my narrow understanding; the Invisible is revealed to my sight; I can touch Him, hear Him, see Him, speak to Him. In the hand which He holds out to save me, I have what my own can grasp. In that eye bent on me, whether bedewed with tears, or beaming with affection, I see divine love in a form I feel and can understand. God addresses me in human tones; God stands before me in the fashion of a man; and, paradox as it appears, when I fall at His feet to say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God, I am an image-worshipper, yet no idolater; for the being before whom I bend is not a mere man, nor a graven image, nor a dead thing, but the living, loving, eternal, 'express image' of the 'invisible God.'"

"Show us the Father," said Philip to our Lord. Had he said, "Cleave me that mountain, divide this sea, stop the sun, lay thy finger on the hands of time," he had asked nothing impossible; nothing more difficult for Jesus than saying to a cripple, "Walk," or to the dead, "Come forth."

Yet, impossible as was that for which Philip asked, since "no man hath seen God at any time, nor can see

Him," and strangely bold as was his request, it was followed by a happy issue.

What clear testimony does our Lord's reply bear, both to His own divinity and to His Father's loving, pitiful, tender nature! "He that hath seen me, Philip," seen me weeping with the living and weeping for the dead, seen me receiving little children into my arms to bless them, seen me inviting the weary to rest, pitying all human suffering, patient under the greatest wrongs, encouraging the penitent, and ready to forgive the vilest sinners, "he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." In me, my character and works, you have a living, visible, perfect "image of the invisible God."

Now, whose footprint is that on the ground there before the tomb of Lazarus? Was it God or man that passed that way, leaving strange evidence of his presence in an empty grave?

There, the revolution of time has brought round again the days of Eden; for, unless it be easier to give life to the dust of the grave than to the dust of the ground, the spectators of that stupendous miracle, who stood transfixed with astonishment, gazing on the dead alive, have seen the arm of God made bare; and, from the very lips that cried, "Lazarus, come forth," have they heard the voice which said of old, "Let us make man in our image."

Nay, a day of older date than Eden's has returned. To make something out of nothing is a work more visibly stamped with divinity than to make one thing out of another—a living man out of lifeless dust; and ere our Lord left the world, he was to leave behind him, in an

act, not of forming, but of creating power, the most visible footprint and impress of the great Creator.

The scene of it may be less picturesque, less striking to common eyes, than, when Jesus rose in the boat to rebuke the storm; than, when leaving Galilee's shore to cross the lake, the waters sustained Him, and He walked like a shadowy spirit, upon the heaving billows; than, when he stayed a funeral procession at the gate of Nain, and, going up to the bier, laid His hand on the corpse of the widow's son, and, changing death to life, left him folding her in his fond embrace; yet, our Lord never appeared more "the express image of His Father," than on yonder green grassy mountain side. The calmness of all the scene, the meanness of the company, if you will have it so, the poverty of the fare, amid these accessories, that are but dull foils to the sparkling gem, Jesus stands forth in the glory of a Creator.

At His will, the bread multiplies; it grows in the hands of disciples; five thousand men are filled to repletion with what had not otherwise satisfied five; and, thing, unheard of before, the fragments of narrow circumstances and a scanty table far exceed the original provision. The materials of the feast filled one basket, but the fragments fill twelve.

Who does not see the day of creation restored in that banquet? In the author of this, the greatest of all His miracles, who does not see "the express image" of Him who made things that are out of things that were not, said of matter's first-born and purest element, "Let there be light; and there was light?"

Looking at such cases, what else was to be expected

from the men of Nazareth, a place of proverbially bad repute, than that they should grudge Jesus His honors, and hate Him for His success? He had emerged from the deepest obscurity into a fame that filled every mouth with His works, and embraced within its widening circle all the land. He had become famous; and they had not. It did not matter that that was not His fault. They felt themselves grow less as He grew greater, and they could not brook that; such as were stars among them, or wished to be thought so, were bitterly mortified to find themselves extinguished in the light of this rising sun. Therefore, they hated Christ, giving Him ground to complain, "A prophet is not without honor but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."

Let me turu your attention to one occasion when this feeling, which had been grumbling like a pent-up volcano, burst forth most insolently, most offensively.

Our Lord was teaching in the synagogue of Nazareth —teaching with that strange, wonderful, divine wisdom, which, in its very dawn, when the child was but twelve years old, astonished the gray divines and subtlest lawyers of the temple; and which not only made unprejudiced hearers hang on His gracious lips, but compelled His enemies to confess,

"Never man spake like this man."

On the occasion to which I refer, envy gnawed, like a canker-worm, at the heart of His townsmen. What business had He to reach an eminence they might aspire to, but could never attain? Hopeless of that, although they could not rise to His height, they might, perchance, pull Him down to their own level. They will try.

And so, at the close of His discourse, when we might have expected them to praise God for the wisdom that had dropped from His lips, and to congratulate Mary on her son, and their native town on an inhabitant whose name would render Nazareth famous to the latest ages, they cast about for something which, by detracting from His glory, might gratify their spleen.

They had nothing to say against either the matter or the manner of the discourse; both were perfect. Nor had they a whisper to breathe against the life and character of the speaker.

A circumstance worthy of note! For it is one of the finest testimonies borne to our Lord's lofty and holy life, that the thirty years which he spent in a small town—where leisure always abounds, and scandal is often rife, and every man's character and habits are discussed in private circles, and dissected by many cutting tongues—did not furnish them with the shred of an excuse for whispering an ill word against Him.

His life resembled a polished mirror, which the foulest breath could not stain, nor dim beyond a passing moment. What a noble testimony to Jesus Christ! Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, envy found no way to vent its malace and spit its venom at him, but by a taunt, she drew from his humble origin and poor relatives. As if it were not an honor to rise above the circumstances of our birth, as if a man's ascent by one step above his original condition—fairly, honestly, and honorably won—were not more a matter of just pride, than a descent traced from the proudest ancestry, they said, "Is not this the *carpentea*, the son of Mary, the brother

of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?—whence, then, hath this man all these things?"

Extending from His early youth into the years of mature manhood, there is a great blank in our Lord's history. Eighteen years of His life stand unaccounted for; and that blank, looking as dark as the starless regions of the sky, tradition, usually so fertile in invention, has not attempted to fill out.

How often have I wondered and tried to fancy what Jesus did, and how He passed the time between His boyhood, when He vanishes from our sight, and His thirtieth year, when He again appears upon the stage to enter on His public ministry?

Thanks to His townsmen's envious sneer, or, rather, thanks to Him who permitted the insult, and thus has made the wrath of man to praise Him, their insolent taunt throws a ray of light into the deep obscurity.

Their question, "Is not this the carpenter?" not, as at another time, the carpenter's son, but the *carpenter* himself, suggests to us the picture of a humble home in Nazareth, known to the neighborhood as the carpenter's, and under whose roof of thatch Jesus resided with His mother—in all probability, then a widow, and, like many a widow since then, cheered by the love and supported by the labors of a dutiful son. I have no doubt that holy angels, turning their wings away from lordly mansions and the proud palaces of kings, often hovered over that peaceful home, as still they, who are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, do over the humblest abodes of piety.

But, so far as this world and its inhabitants were concerned, Jesus passed His days in contented obscurity, unnoticed and unknown, save to the neighbors, whose esteem he could not fail to win by his pure life, and gentle temper, and holy manners. He was to grow in favor with God and man.

All Nazareth regarded Him as a paragon of human virtues, and many a mother pointed to Mary's son as the pattern, her own lads should copy.

How wonderful it is to transport ourselves back, in fancy, some eighteen hundred years, to that small town; and, on asking, with the Greeks, to "see Jesus," to be conducted to a humble dwelling, where chips of wood, and squared logs, and unbarked trunks of trees lying about, in the oak, and olive, and cedar, and sycamore, that had fallen to His axe, point out, "the carpenter's."

By the door, and under a bowering vine, which, trained beneath the eaves over some rude trellis-work, forms a grateful shade from the noon-day sun, a widow sits—her fingers employed in weaving, but an expression in her face and eye which indicates a mind engaged in far loftier objects, thoughts, deeper, holier, stranger, than a buried husband, and a widow's grief.

She rises, lifts the latch, and, stooping, we enter that lowly door; and there, bending to His work, we see the carpenter—in him the Son of the Most High God!

Time was, when He set His compass on the deep; time was, when He stood and measured the earth; and now, with line, and compass, and plane, and hatchet, the sweat dropping from His lofty brow, He, who made Heavenand Earth, and the sea, and all that in them is,

in the guise of a common tradesman, bends at a carpenter's bench.

How low He stooped to save us!

The world was once astonished to see a king stoop to such work. The founder of the Russian empire left his palace and capital, the seductive pleasures and all the pomp of royalty, to acquire the art of ship-building in the dock-yard of a Dutch sea-port. He learned it that he might teach it to his subjects; he became a servant that he might be the better master, and lay in Russia the foundations of a great naval power. Nor has his country been ungrateful; her capital, which bears his name, is adorned with a monument to his memory, massive as his mind; and she has embalmed his deathless name in her heart and in her victories.

Yet, little as many think of Jesus, lightly as they esteem Him, a far greater sight is here.

There, in a king, becoming a subject, that his subjects might find in him a king, there was much for men; but here, there is much for both, men and angels, to wonder at, and praise through all eternity.

The Son of God stoops to toil. What an amazing scene! Henceforth let honest labor feel itself ennobled; let no man, whatever rank he has attained, blush for the meanness of his origin, or be ashamed of his father's trade; let the sons of toil lift their heads before the overweening pride of birth or wealth, and feel themselves stand taller on the earth; let the idle learn to do some good in this world, and turn their brains and hands to some useful purpose; above all, let sinners behold a marvelous, most affecting exhibition of the condescen-

sion and love of God. This carpenter of Nazareth is He whom the apostle calls "the first-born of every creature;" and "by Him," he adds, "were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

Let us now consider the meaning of this expression, "the first-born of every creature," and let me show what the expression does not and can not mean.

The first born of every creature! A strange expression! one which, seeming to assign to our Lord a place among creatures, sounds so strangely that, in some degree perplexed, we are ready to ask what the apostle can mean by applying such a questionable term to the eternal Son of God? For, though he honors Him with the foremost place, still he seems to place Him in the rank of creatures.

Now, there are those who say that Christ was a *mere man;* and this expression, no doubt, cuts the ground out from below their feet.

The first-born of every creature—these words, assigning to our Lord, at the very least, the highest place among the highest angels, do not leave the Socinian an inch of ground to stand on. But do they not, it may be asked, seem to countenance the Arian heresy—the doctrine of those who hold that, although the highest and noblest of all created things, our Lord, notwithstanding, is still a creature? Is it so? Have we mistaken His true character? Shall we find, in going to glory, that,

as ardent love is prone to do, we have exaggerated His excellences ; and that, while another occupies the throne of Heaven, Jesus is but the first in her noble peerage, the highest and oldest of her ancient nobility?

Even as being the first of creatures in point of rank and age, as one who dwelt with God when there was none other than Himself, as one whose life dates back beyond the far remote period when seas first rolled, and stars shone, and angels sang, Jesus were an object, next to God, He were the object of our deepest interest.

Yet, if our blessed Lord is only a creature, however great His power, exalted His rank, pure His nature, lofty His intellect, and incalculable the years of His age, I cannot trust Him with my soul ; I cannot depend on Him for salvation ; I cannot, dare not worship Him, nor overleap this barrier, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

Age, indeed, heightens the grandeur of the grandest objects. The bald, hoar mountains rise in dignity, the voice of ocean sounds more sublime on her stormy shores, and the starry heavens sparkle with brighter splendor, when we think how old they are; how long is it since that ocean began to roll, or those lamps of night to shine.

Yet these, the first star that ever shone, nay, the first angel that ever sang, are but things of yesterday beside this manger, where, couched in straw and wrapped in swaddling clothes, a new-born babe is sleeping.

"Before Abraham was," or these were, "I am," says Jesus. His mother's maker, and His mother's child, He formed the living womb that gave Him birth, and, ten

thousand ages before that, the dead rock, that gave Him burial.

A child, yet Almighty God; a son, yet the everlasting Father, His history carries us back into eternity; and the dignities which He left, those glories which He veiled, how should they lead us to adorn His transcendent love, and to kneel the lower at His cross to cry, "Jesus! thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women, My soul does magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Savior."

When Ulysses returned with fond anticipations to his home in Ithaca, his family did not recognize him. Even the wife of his bosom denied her husband—so changed was he by an absence of twenty years, and the hardships of a long-protracted war.

It was thus true of the vexed and astonished Greek, as of a nobler King, that he came unto his own, and his own received him not. In this painful position of affairs he called for a bow which he had left at home, when, embarking for the siege of Troy, he bade farewell to the orange-groves and vine-clad hills of Ithaca.

With characteristic sagacity, he saw how a bow, so stout and tough that none but himself could draw it, might be made to bear witness on his behalf. He seized it. To their surprise and joy, like a green wand lopped from a willow tree, it yields to his arms; it bends till the bow-string touches his ear. His wife, now sure that he is her long-lost and long-lamented husband, throws herself into his fond embraces, and his household confess him the true Ulysses.

If I may compare small things with great, our Lord

gave such proofs of His divinity when He, too, stood a stranger in His own house, despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He bent the stubborn laws of nature to His will. He proved Himself Creator by His mastery over creation. The winds that sweep the deep, and the free wild sea, they sweep, alike controlled, leprosy and shaking palsy healed, the rolling eye of madness calmed, the shrouded corpse and the buried dead restored to life by a word, calmly spoken after the manner and with the power of a master—these things leave one to wonder that the spectators did not fall down to worship; and, recognizing God in the guise of man, say, "the voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty."

If nothing could be more sublime than that scene on the Lake of Galilee, when, tranquil in aspect, Jesus stood on the bow of the reeling boat, and while the storm played around, and the spray flew in white sheets over His naked head, calmly eyed the war of elements, and, raising His hand, said, "Peace, be still!" could anything be more conclusive than the evidence which these waves and winds afforded, that the Master Himself was come home? No clearer shone the stars that night, mirrored in the placid waters. There, the wind lulled, and the wild waves at rest, deep silence spake. By that sudden hush, nature proclaimed Him God, Lord, Creator of all.

Declared to be so by inspired tongues, and by such strange witnesses as winds and waves, devils, disease, death, and the grave—Heaven concurs in their testimony; by the voices of her saints and angels, by their worship,



CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE.—From the Painting by Hoffman.

hymns, harps, and hallelujahs, proclaiming Him creator and Lord of all.

Let us, in imagination, pass the angel guardians of those gates where no error enters, and, entering that upper sanctuary which no discord divides, no heresy disturbs, let us find out who worships, and who is worshipped there.

The law, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve," extends to heaven as well as to earth; so that if our Lord is only the highest of all creatures, we shall find him on his knees—not the worshipped, but a worshipper; and from his lofty, and lonely, and, to other creatures, unapproachable, pinnacle, looking up to God, as does the highest of the snow-crowned Alps to the sun, that, shining far above it, bathes its head in light.

We have sought Him, I shall suppose, in that group where His mother sits with the other Marys, sought Him among the twelve apostles, or where the chief of apostles reasons with angels on things profound, or where David, royal leader of the heavenly choir, strikes his harp, or where the beggar, enjoying the repose of Abraham's bosom, forgets his wrongs, or where martyrs and confessors, and they which have come out of great tribulation, with robes of purest white, and crowns of brightest glory, swell the song of salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

He is not there.

Rising upwards, we seek him where angels hover on wings of light, or, with feet and faces veiled, bend before a throne of dazzling glory. Nor is he there. He does

not belong to their company. Verily he took not on him the nature of angels.

Eighteen hundred years ago Mary is rushing through the streets of Jerusalem, speed in her steps, wild anxiety in her look, one question to all on her eager lips,

"Have you seen my son?"

Eighteen hundred years ago, on these same streets, some Greeks accost a Galilee fisherman, saying,

"Sir, we would see Jesus."

Now, were we, bent like his mother on finding, like these Greeks on seeing him, to stay a passing angel, and accost him in the words, "Sir, we would see Jesus," what would he do? How would his arm rise, and his finger point us upward to the throne as he fell down to worship, and worshipping, to swell the flood of song which, in this one full stream, mingles the names of the Father, and of the Son—Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.

Such a glorious vision, such worship, the voices that sounded on John's ear as the voice of many waters, the distant roar of ocean, are in perfect harmony with the exalted honor, and divine offices, which Paul assigns to our Lord in the words:

All things were created for Him.

If our Lord Jesus Christ were other and less than God, then, in kindling yonder sun, in lighting up the starry sky, he no more acts for himself than the domestic does, who, appearing at my call, lights my lamp, or stoops on the hearth-stone to kindle my fire. It is the

very nature of a creature to be a dependent, and hold a servant's place.

Nor, as I read my Bible, was any man ever more justly condemned to die than Jesus, if he were but a man.

In that case, he did undoubtedly lay himself open to the charge of blasphemy, since—as the Jews truly averred, and he never denied, nor so much as attempted to explain it away—he made himself the Son of God, "equal with God."

No doubt our Lord did that; in such plain terms claiming divine equality, as to justify the use by Paul of this bold language:

"He thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

And, as the rainbow looks the brighter, the blacker the cloud, it spans, the majesty of His claim is brought out by the meanness of the circumstances in which it was made.

Deserted by the world, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, dependent on a few humble followers for the most common necessaries of life, within some hours of an ignominious end, his foot already on the verge of the grave, he rises to the loftiness of Godhead; and, turning an eye that was to be soon darkened in death on earth and in heaven, he claims a community of property with God.

"All things," he says, "that the Father hath are mine." To the "all mine are thine," this dying man adds, "thine are mine."

He speaks to God. Thine, thy eternity, thy throne, thy glory, thy crown, thy sceptre, all are mine.

Great words, pregnant with the strongest consolation and most glorious truths! For, if in the very nature of things, all that is God's is Christ's, and, according to the terms of the New Covenant, all that is Christ's is ours, these words draw everything that belongs to God into the hands of the humblest believer!

What a faith is that! What comfort should it give you! What courage should it impart to you! What gratitude should it beget in you! Rich amid poverty, full in emptiness, and in weakness strong, with what blessed peace may the believer lie in God's arms, saying with David, "I will fear none evil"; or with Paul, as he addresses himself to work or war, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

If philosophy is to be believed, our world is but an outlying corner of creation; bearing, perhaps, as small a proportian to the great universe, as a single grain bears to all the sands of the sea-shore, or one small, quivering leaf to the foliage of a boundless forest.

Yet, even within this earth's narrow limits, how vast the work of Providence! How soon is the mind lost in contemplating it! How great that Being whose hand paints every flower, and shapes every leaf; who forms every bud on every tree, and every infant in the darkness of the womb; who feeds each crawling worm with a parent's care, and watches like a mother over the insect that sleeps away the night in the bosom of a flower; who throws open the golden gates of day, and draws around a sleeping world the dusky curtains of the night; who measures out the drops of every shower, the whirling snow-flakes, and the sands of man's eventful life; who

determines alike the fall of a sparrow and the fate of a kingdom; and so over-rules the tide of human fortunes, that whatever befall him, come joy or sorrow, the believer says, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good."

In ascribing this great work to Jesus Christ, my text calls you to render Him divine honors. In the hands that were once nailed to the cross, it places the sceptre of universal empire; and on those blessed arms that, once thrown around a mother's neck, now tenderly enfold every child of God, it hangs the weight of worlds.

Great is the mystery of godliness! Yet so it is, plainly written in the words, "By Him all things consist." By Him the angels keep their holiness, and the stars their orbits; the tides roll along the deep, and the seasons through the year; kings reign, and princes decree justice; the church of God is held together, riding out at anchor the rudest storms; and by Him, until the last of His elect are plucked from the wreck, and His purposes of mercy are all accomplished, this guilty world is kept from sinking under a growing load of sins.

"By Him all things consist."

Wonderful words, as spoken of one who, some eighteen centuries ago, was a houseless wanderer, a pensioner on woman's charity, and not seldom without a place where to lay His head! Yet how clearly do these words attest His dignity and divinity?

More could not be said of God; and Paul will not say less of Christ. Nor, great and glorious as they are, do they stand alone. Certainly not. In language as

lofty, and ascribing to Jesus honors no less divine, the apostle thus writes to the Hebrews :

"God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds ; who, being the brightness of His glory, and 'the express image of His person,' and *upholding all things by the word of His power*, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ?"

How wonderful ! He left a grave to ascend the throne ; He exchanged the side of a dying thief for the right hand of God ; He dropped a reed to assume the sceptre of earth and heaven ; He put off a wreath of thorns to put on a sovereign's crown ; and, in that work of providence to which I would now turn your attention, you behold Him, who died to save the chief of sinners, made "Head over all things to the church."

Great is the mystery of godliness ! The most precious mystery is the greatest of all mysteries. Neither in man, nor in angel, nor in any other creature, is there such a combination of what appears irreconcilable properties, and harmonizing of what seems discordant, such blending and bringing together of the peculiar characteristics of distinct and different orders, as in "the mystery of godliness."

In His person, and character, and work, our Lord Jesus Christ presents what is explicable, and, to my mind, credible, on no theory but one, that He was God manifest in the flesh, Emmanuel, God with us. Indeed,

I should find it, I think, an easier thing to deny the divinity of the Bible, than, having admitted that, to reject the divinity of our Lord. To illustrate this extraordinary conjunction of apparently conflicting elements found in Him:

1. Look at our Lord by the grave of Lazarus. How truly man, partaker of our common nature! The sight of the tomb wakens all His grief; the sufferings of these two sisters, clinging to each other, touch His loving heart; and there He stands, forever sanctioning sorrow, and even exalting it into a manly, most noble thing. His eyes swim in tears, groans rend his bosom; He is so deeply, so uncontrollably, so visibly affected, that the spectators say, "See how He loved him!" Jesus wept. So it was some moments ago. But now, what a change! The crowd retreats, surprise, wonder, terror seated on every face; the boldest recoiling from that awful form which comes shuffling out of the grave. This man of tears, so gentle, so tender, so easily moved that he often wept, endured with a sensibility so delicate that the strings of his heart vibrated to the slightest touch, has, by a word, rent the tomb. Struck with terror, the witch of Endor shrieked when she saw the form of Samuel emerging from the ground; what a contrast, this scene to that! Not in the least surprised at the event, as if, in raising the buried dead, he had done nothing more remarkable than light a lamp or rekindle the embers of an extinguished fire, calm and tranquil, Jesus points to Lazarus, saying, "Loose him, and let him go."

2. Look at Jesus by Jacob's well. There a woman who had come to draw water about mid-day, finds a

traveler seated. She looks at him. He is brown with the dust of a journey; he looks pale and worn, and weary; the hot sun beats upon his head. He accosts her, saying, "Give me to drink" And in granting it—for women seldom refuse kindness to the needy—she fancies, no doubt, that this is some poor Jew, whose haughty pride bends to necessity in asking the meanest favor from a Samaritan. So he seemed, when, gratefully acknowledging her kindness, he bent his head, and drank deep draughts of the cool, refreshing water. But, when he has raised his eyes to look, not into her face, but into her heart, and to read off, as from a book, its most secret thoughts, and, although they had never met before, to tell her all, to use her own words, that she had ever done, with what wonder does she regard him? She is amazed and awed.

Well she might. The thirsty, way-worn man has suddenly changed into the omniscient God.

Thus the incommunicable attributes of Divinity, and the common properties of humanity, stand out equally clear in our Lord's life and person.

And just such a conjunction of things apparently irreconcilable presents itself to our attention in the description given of Jesus Christ in this verse.

In this clause, He is described by a term sacred to God; we pass on to the next, and step at once from the throne of the heavens down into a grave. In these words, "the beginning," we behold Him presiding at the creation of the universe; by those which follow, "the first-born from the dead," we are carried in fancy to a lonely garden, where, all quiet within, Roman sentinels

keep watch by a tomb, or where, as they fly in pale terror from the scene, we see Him who had filled the eternal throne, and been clothed with light as with a garment, putting off a shroud, and leaving a tomb. What key is there to this mystery, what possible way of harmonizing these things, but this, that Christ, while man, was more than man, one who has brought together properties so wide apart as dust and divinity, time and eternity, eternal Godhead and mortal manhood? What comfort to us, as well as glory to Him, in this combination! Should it not dissipate every care and fear, to think that our Savior, friend, and lover, has the heart of a brother and the hand of God?

He must be God who is almighty. He must be God who is, and was, and is to come; and since "the beginning" is another title applied to that passage to the same august, and infinite, and adorable Being, by applying it to our Lord, Paul pronounces Him divine, and around the head which was once pillowed on a woman's bosom, and once bowed in death upon a cross, he throws a halo of uncreated glory. A man, worshipped in Heaven; a babe, adored on earth; the infant's advent, sung by angels; sable night throwing off her gloom, and breaking into splendor above his manger-cradle; one whom many well remembered, as if it were but yesterday, carried in Mary's arms or playing with the boys of Nazareth, now claiming to be older than Abraham; his step on the water lighter than a shadow's, his voice on the water mighty as God's; the prompt obedience of unruly elements; the sullen submission of reluctant devils, as they retired back, and farther back, before that single man, like a

broken band retreating in the face of an overwhelming force; the hand that was nailed to the cross freely dispensing crowns of glory, and opening the gates of Heaven to a dying thief; the earth trembling with horror, and the sun turned mourner because they were murdering their Lord; the adoring admiration of the great apostle, who, contemplating an infant cradled in a manger, a man hanging on a bloody tree, a tomb and its lonely tenant, found heaven too low, and hell too shallow, and space too short, to set forth the greatness of the love that gave the Savior to die for us; these marvels, otherwise utterly inexplicable, have their key in "the mystery of godliness;" Jesus Christ was "God manifest in the flesh."

What a precious truth!

The blood of Calvary being, as Paul calls it, the blood of God, may well have virtue in it to cleanse from all sin, so that though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

A house, again, begins at the foundation. The first stone laid is the foundation stone. That may be sunk in a deep, dark hole; yet, though it lies there, unseen and forgotten by the thoughtless, it is the stability and support of all the superincumbent structure.

And when the nails were drawn, and the mangled body of our Lord was lowered from the cross, and received into woman's arms, and borne without any funeral pomp by a few sincere mourners to the lonesome tomb, and, amid sobs, and groans, and tears, and bitter griefs, laid in that dark sepulchre, then did God in Heaven say:

"Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation."

Yes, it was a tried stone. He had been tried by men and devils, and by his Father, too; hunger, and thirst, and suffering, and death, had tried him.

Since then, the foundation has often been tried, in great temptations, and sore afflictions, and fierce assaults of the Evil One; winds have blown, and rains have fallen, and rivers have swelled, and heavy floods have rolled, but the man who has believed in Christ, and the hopes that have rested on his finished work, have stood firm and unmoved.

Saints triumphing over temptation, martyrs singing in prison, believers dying in peace, devils baffled, hell defeated, have made good Christ's words, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The author of our faith, the founder of his church, Christ began it ere the world began, or sun or stars shone in heaven. He had the life-boat on the beach before the bark was stranded, or launched, or even built.

Not eighteen hundred years ago, when the cross rose, with its bleeding victim, high above the heads of a crowd on Calvary, not the hour of the Fall, when God descended into the garden to comfort our parents, and crush, if not then the head, the hopes of the serpent, but eternal ages before these events saw the beginning of the church of Christ. He began it in the councils of eternity, when, standing up before his Father, to say; "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God," he offered himself a substitute and a

sacrifice for men. He was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

There is no sensibility in the dead. The eyelids, your fingers have closed, open no more to the light of day. The morning raises up all within the house to a fresh sense of bereavement; without, it wakens business, pleasure, the music of skies and groves; but it wakens not the sleeper in that locked and lonely chamber, who, once dreading to be left alone, is alike fearless now of darkness and of solitude.

There is no passion in the dead. The sight of them affects us, not our grief and sorrow them; as well kiss marble as that icy brow; our tears will flow, nor does Christ forbid them; but their hotest gushes thaw not the fountains that death has frozen.

There is no power in the dead. The cold hand, you lift, drops; the poor body lies as it is laid. And, so soon as that last, long sigh is drawn, though the color still lingers on the cheek, and the limbs are not yet stiffened into cold rigidity, they can rise no more than the ashes on the hearth can resume their original form, and change into what once they were, a branch green with leaves, and decked with fragrant blossoms. The dead can do nothing to help themselves.

In all cases but Christ's resurrection, life was not resumed, but restored; it was given, not taken back. At the grave of Lazarus it proceeded from Christ's lips, wafted on the air to the ear of death.

At the gate of Nain it passed from Christ's hand, streaming, like the electric fluid, into the body of the widow's son.

And there, where Elisha lies stretched on the Shunammite's dead boy, his eyes on the child's eyes, his hands on the child's hands, his lips on the child's lips, that prostrate, praying man forms a connecting medium by which life flows out of Him in whom is its fullness, to fill a vessel that death has emptied.

And, at the last day, we ourselves shall not awake, but be wakened, roused from sleep by the trump of God, as, blown by an angel's breath, it sounds throughout the world, echoing in the deepest caves of ocean, and rending the marble of the tomb.

Now, look at our Lord's resurrection. He rose in the silent night: no hand at the door, no voice in his ear, no rough touch awakening Him. Other watchers than Philate's soldiers stood by the sepulchre; but these angels, whom it well became to keep guard at this dead man's chamber door, beyond opening it, beyond rolling away the stone, beyond looking on with wondering eyes, took no part in the scenes of that eventful morning.

The hour sounds; the appointed time arrives. Having slept out his sleep, Jesus stirs; he awakes of his own accord; he rises by his own power; and arranging, or leaving attending angels to arrange, the linen clothes, he walks out of the dewy ground, beneath the starry sky, to turn grief into the greatest joy, and hail the breaking of the brightest morn that ever rose on this guilty world. That open, empty tomb assures us of a day when ours, too, shall be as empty.

Having raised himself, he has power to raise his people. Panic-stricken soldiers flying the scene, and Mary rising from His blessed feet to haste to the city, to

rush through the streets, to burst in among the disciples, and, with a voice of joy, to cry,

"He is risen! He is risen!"

prove this was no vain brag or boast, "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

The child of the Shunammite, the daughter of the ruler, the widow of Nain's son Lazarus, and all the saints who followed our Lord from the grave, were prisoners on parole. The grave took them, bound to return. Dear-bought honors theirs!

While Enoch and Elijah never tasted death, these twice drank the bitter cup; with one cradle each had two coffins; one birth, but two burials; and thus, that God might be glorified, suffering pains from which obscure saints have been exempt, they in part fulfilled the noble saying of that dauntless martyr, who declared his love for Christ to be such, that if he had as many lives as he had gray hairs on his head, he would lay them all down for Him.

These honored ones were out on bail.

After a while they retraced their steps; and, now lying in dusty death, they wait the summons of the resurrection. But Jesus waits to summon, not to be summoned. The grave holds them, but Heaven holds Him. For Heaven, as well as hell, was moved at His coming; and there, saints adoring, angels worshipping at his feet, in the very body which was stretched on the cross and laid in the sepulchre for us, he fills his Father's throne.

The King of kings, and Lord of lords is "He who liveth and was dead."

It is better for me, if I am a poor man standing in need of royal favors, to have a friend at court than in my own humble cottage; and it is better for us that Christ is with his Father in Heaven than with his people on earth. "It is expedient for you," he said, "that I go away."

He has gone to prepare a place for us; and while his Spirit has come down to take care of the business of his church on earth, he looks after and watches over its affairs in Heaven.

He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. So, after three days unbroken rest, he rose to sleep no more, and be the first-born of the dead. Apart from that, precedence was his right. It belonged to him in the very nature of things. The king precedes his train; the head rises first out of pit or grave, afterward the body and its members; the foundation stone is laid first, afterward the stones of the superstructure; the elder brother breaks first from a mother's womb, afterward the children of whom he is forerunner.

It is as the prelude of our own resurrection, that Christ's is to us the object of the greatest satisfaction and joy. In these cast-off grave clothes, in that linen sbroud and napkin, there is more to draw our eyes, and fix our interest, and move our admiration, than in the jewelled robes or royal purple of the greatest monarch of earth.

That empty tomb, roughly hewn in the rock, is a greater sight than Egypt's mighty pyramids, or the

costliest sepulchres that have received the ashes of the proudest kings. How full of meaning is its very emptiness!

What good news to us in Mary's disappointment! What joys flow to us in these women's tears! Thanks be to God, they could not find him. He is not there. No, Mary! they have not taken away your Lord; no robber has rifled that sacred tomb. See, the dew lies sparkling on the grass, no feet have brushed it but those of one who has left the grave. He is risen; and, as the first fruits of them that sleep, as the first ripe sheaf that was offered to the Lord, his resurrection is the pledge and promise of a coming harvest. Henceforth the grave holds but a lease of the saints. Because he rose, we shall rise also.

JACOB.

To-morrow Esau and Jacob are to meet.

There was a quarrel of long standing between them, which had all the bitterness of a domestic feud.

Jacob had foully deceived and deeply injured his brother. He had not seen Esau for many years, and, dreading his vengeance, he now heard of his approach, at the head of four hundred men, with fear and trembling.

Greatly alarmed, he cried, "God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, deliver me, I pray thee,



MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS..
From a Photograph of the Character in the Passion Play.

from the hand of my brother; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, the mother with the children."

Pattern to us when temptation threatens, or dark misfortunes lower, Jacob, having done all that man's wisdom could devise, or his power could do in the circumstances, flies for help to God. He will prepare for to-morrow's trial by a night of prayer.

Sending off his wives and children across Jabbok's stream, to place them as far as possible out of danger and leave these innocent ones to forget it in sleep's sweet oblivion, he seeks himself as olitary spot,.

With dəepest silence all around him, and the bright stars above his head, he is on his knees alone with God. Suddenly, as if he had approached with the stealth of a creeping savage, or had sprung from out of the ground, some one grasps him.

Folded in his arms, Jacob cannot cast him off. Now it becomes a struggle for the mastery. Locked together, they wrestle in the dark; they bend; they try each to throw the other; and, in some mysterious commingling of bodily and spiritual wrestling, the night passes, and the conflict lasts till break of day.

"Let me go," said the other, whose eye had caught the gleam of morning, "for the day breaketh."

Jacob but held him faster. He had found out the other wrestler; danger gave him boldness; faith gave him confidence; and, clinging to God with the grasp of a drowning man, he replied, "I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me." And when he had prevailed, and got the blessing, Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; "for I have *seen God* face to face, and my life is preserved."

ADAM.

THEN, there are living as well as dead images.

And as a Christian's life, without any occasion for his lips telling it, should proclaim him to the world a child of God, so I have known an infant bear such striking resemblance to his father, that what his tongue could not tell, his face did; and people, struck by the likeness, remarked of the nursling, "He is the very image of his father."

Such was Adam, in his state of innocence.

Endowing him with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, God made good His words:

"Let us make man in our own image."

JOSHUA.

WHAT a godlike action of Joshua's on that battlefield, when he met, and where he conquered five kings in fight! God fought for him in hailstones, and he fought for God with swords; and no more than devils of hell could stand before us, did prayer always summon heaven to our aid, could mortal man stand before such onslaught—"Kings of armies did flee apace;" that day five crowns were lost. But, apparently, a most inopportune event, ere Joshua has reaped the fruits of his victory, the sun, emerging from the dark hail-cloud, has sunk low in the sky. His burning wheels touch the crest of Gibeon, while the pale

moon, marshaling on the night to protect the flying enemy, is showing her face over the valley of Ajalon.

Joshua sees, that, as has happened to other conquerors, darkness will rob him of the prize; nor leave anything more substantial in his hand than a wreath of laurel, the honors of the day.

Inspired for the occasion, he lifts his bloody sword to the heavens, he commands their luminaries to stop; and when, like high-mettled coursers which, knowing their masters' hand, instantly obey the rein, the sun and moon stand still, stand motionless in the portentious sky, how grandly does he stand there, a visible image of God?

Yet, where is Joshua, or Moses, or Elijah, or Paul, or Peter, or any of all the servants by whom Jehovah wrought such wonders in the days of old, called an "image of the invisible God?"

Where are these men set forth as mysteries?

Where are they represented as "God manifest in the flesh?"

Of which of them did God himself say, "Let all the angels of God worship him?"

A blind superstition may worship them; but yonder, where Moses bends the knee by the side of Mary Magdalene, and Joshua bows low as Rahab, and Paul sings of the mercy that saved in himself the chief of sinners, they worship Jesus, as in His double nature, both God and man; a visible manifestation of the invisible; "the only begotten of the Father;" distinguished from all other images, whether impressed on holy angels or on sainted men, as "the *express* image of His person."

Herein lies the amazing breadth, and length, and

depth, and height, of the love of God; for you he gave that image to be broken—shattered by the hand of death. Blessed be His name, He died, the just for the unjust, that we might be saved.

MOSES.

Now, SEE how Moses, the meekest, noblest, most generous of men was envied by ambitious spirits among the children of Israel!

"Ye take too much upon you," they said to him and his brother, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore, then, lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?

Ay, and even his own brother and sister grew jealous of him. On pretence of his having done wrong in marrying an Ethiopian woman, they who should have supported the brother to whom they owed their position, most basely and ungratefully attempted to undermine his influence. It was very wrong in Moses to make this marriage—to enter into such an unsuitable alliance; so they said to the multitude.

Yet mere dust and smoke *that*, which they raised to cover their real motives and base ends. The envy, from whose evil eye no excellence is a protecting charm, and which, rending asunder the most sacred ties, refuses to spare a brother, was at the bottom of the discontent.

For, while Aaron and Miriam held such language to the people, masking their selfish passions under a fair pretence of patriotism and piety, listen to them in their tent, how different their language to each other, "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath He not spoken also by us?"

GOD.

THE doctrine of the being of a God.

I do not need to open the Bible to learn that. It is enough that I open my eyes, and turn them on that great book of nature, where it is legibly written, clearly revealed on every page.

God! that word may be read in the stars and on the face of the sun; it is painted on every flower, traced on every leaf, engraven on every rock; it is whispered by the winds, sounded forth by the billows of ocean, and may be heard by the dullest ear in the long-rolling thunder.

I believe in the existence of a God, but not in the existence of an atheist; or that any man is so, who can be considered in his sound and sober senses.

What should we think of one who attempted to account for any other works of beauty and evident design, as he professes to do for those of God?

Here is a classic temple; here stands a statue, designed with such taste and executed with such skill, that

one almost expects the marble to leap from its pedestal; here hangs a painting of some dead beloved one, so life-like as to move our tears; here, in Iliad, or Æneid, or Paradise Lost, is a noble poem, full of the grandest thoughts, and clothed ins ublimest imagery; here is a piece of most delicate, intricate, and ingenious mechanism.

Well, let a man tell me gravely, that these were the works of chance; tell me, when I ask who made them, that nobody made them; tell me, that the arrangement of the letters in this poem, and of the colors in that picture, of the features in the statue, was a matter of mere chance; how I should stare at him? and conclude, without a moment's hesitation, that I had fallen into the company of a raving madman, or of some drivelling idiot.

Turning away from such atheistic ravings about the infinitely more glorious works of God, with what delight does reason listen, and with what readiness does she assent, and with what distinct and hearty voice does she echo the closing words of the seraphim's hymn, "the whole earth is full of His glory!"

Some talk as if we were saved just because Christ paid our debt, representing God's share in the transaction as little else than that of a severe, stern, unrelenting creditor, who takes no interest in his imprisoned debtor beyond letting him out when the surety has taken up the bond.

Is this true? Is it fair to God? True? It is utterly false. Salvation flows from a higher source than Calvary. It has its foundation, not in the cross of the incarnate

Son, but in the bosom of the eternal Father. These hoar hills, with their time-furrowed brows, that ocean, which bears on its face no mark of age, those morning stars, which sang together when our world was born, these old heavens, are not so old as the love of God.

It dates from eternity. Eternal ages before the Law was given, or broken, or satisfied, he loved us. The central truth of the Bible, that on which I lay the greatest stress and rest my strongest hopes, is this, that God does not love us because Christ died for us, but that Christ died for us because God loved us.

I do not disparage the work of Christ; far be such a thought from me. Yet Christ himself is the gift of divine love, the divine expression of our Father's desire to be reconciled. The Lord of angels hanging on a mother's bosom, the Creator of heaven and earth bending to a humble task, the judge of all standing accused in the place of common felons, the Son of his Father's love nailed amid derision to an ignominious cross, death rudely seizing him, the dark grave receiving him, we owe to the love of God. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. What love do we owe Him who so loved us.

JOB.

JOB's history furnishes a notable example.

Satan has gone forth from the presence of the Lord, armed with this commission: Behold, all that he hath is

in thy power ; only upon himself put not forth thy hand. The devil can never go a step further against the saints than God chooses to give him chain.

That is great comfort.

Yet, how ruthlessly, how pitilessly, how maglignantly the Enemy of man used his power on this occasion, you know. The gallant ship that, with songs below, and gay dances on her deck, was sailing on a summer day over a glassy sea, in her sky no portentous clouds, in her snowy sheets but wind enough to waft her home, and of which, by nightfall, the only vestiges are some broken timbers, afloat in the foam, that the wild waves are grinding on the horrid reef, presents a striking image of the change that one short, eventful day brought on the house and fortunes of this man of God.

One, following hard upon another, like successive shocks of an earthquake, the messengers of disaster come. Ruin, ruin, is on their lips, as, pale with terror, panting for breath, they arrive with their tidings, and doleful echo, that ever-recurring close of the woful tale, "I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

Cattle, flocks, camels gone, all his property sunk, Job is a beggared man.

Yet, his children are safe ; and with seven gallant sons, and three fair daughters, he still is rich. These spared, let all else perish. But, ah ! the next wave, towering, cresting high over head, falls on his laboring bark, and, sweeping the deck clean, leaves none standing there but himself and a frantic mother ; nor is theirs the consolation of the mother, who, reaching the shore

with her living babe, presses it to her bosom, and holds herself compensated for all other losses.

They are dead, cries the last messenger; they are dead, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Dead? We almost expect to see himself fall dead; stunned, killed by this crowning, this overwhelming stroke. But no. Greatest of heroes, spectacle for angels to admire, pattern for believers to imitate in the hour of their most adverse fortunes, he arose and worshippcd—arose, as the ball which rebounds the higher, the harder it is struck; as the eagle which reaches her loftiest flight, not in serene, but in tempestuous skies. Owning the Providence in whose hand Sabean and Chaldean, fiery thunderbolt and roaring whirlwind, were only instruments, Job bows before the throne of God, and says, with a patience more uncommon even than his trials, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Sins, like seeds, lie dormant till circumstances call them into active existence. Aware of that, Satan knew right well what he was saying when, in reply to God's praise of his servant Job, he said, with a sneer, "Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blest the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face."

And so the good man had done, but for restraining grace. What a burst of pent-up passion, like the fiery

eruption of a volcano, breaks the seven days' awful silence, "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, 'There is a man child conceived; let that day be darkness.' Why died I not from the womb? Why did the knees prevent me? Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; which rejoice exceedingly and are glad when they can find the grave?"

Here Job curses the day that he was born; and he who curses God's providence has to take but another step, and he curses God himself. But that a divine arm had borne his burden, but that a divine hand curbed his passions, that woman, raging like a bear bereaved of her whelps, would have had no occasion to reproach him for his tame submission. No. He had vented curses, if not as loud, perhaps, like the river where it flows sullen and black, more deep than hers; and, standing side by side over a grave big with bodies and with grief, they had raised their hands together against the heavens, and flung back their life at him who had embittered it.

But for the grace of God, Job had been no pattern of patience.

And let the grave, which both sustained and restrained him, be withdrawn from any of us, and our natural enmity and corruption would break out after such a fashion as would astonish ourselves, shock the ears of the public, and leave many to hold up their hands to exclaim: "Lord, what a man!"

ABSALOM.

On the other hand, look at Absalom!

What winning manners, what grace and beauty, how much of all that in form and features pleases the eye and ministers to the pride of life, are united in that man to the greatest moral baseness! as if God would show us in how little esteem he holds what he threw away on so bad a man; as if he intended to rebuke the silly vanity which worships at a mirror, and feeds on charms that shall feed the worms of the grave.

Nor is his the only case where a fair form has lodged a foul heart, and crimes of treachery and murder have stained the hands of beauty.

SAMSON.

On the other hand, it was, at least in some respects, a weak head that stood on the broad shoulders of Samson!

Whom the Philistines could not subdue, a woman conquered, binding with her charms one whom they could not bind with their chains.

He fell before the influence that in Solomon's case made the wisest the most foolish of men.

God says, "In vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird"; yet see how Samson walks straight in, snared by a cunning, transparent to all eyes but his own. Enslaved by animal passions, asleep in Delilah's traitor-

ous lap, a fettered captive in the hands of the Philistines, there he lies, a great lion in the hunter's net; reminding us, by way of contrast, of the words, "Wisdom is better than strength; wisdom is better than weapons of war."

QUEEN ESTHER.

WITHIN the palace, but without the throne-room of Shushan, Queen Esther stands.

They who enter the king's presence unsummoned, do it at the risk of their life; and resolved in a good cause to dare the penalty, she stands there with her jeweled foot upon the grave.

A noble spectacle! not so much for her unrivalled beauty, still less for the splendor of her apparel, as for the resolution to venture life, and either save her nation or perish in the attempt.

In her blooming youth, in the admiration of the court, in the affections of her husband, in her lofty rank, in her queenly honors, she has everything to make life attractive. Hers is a golden cup; and it is foaming of pleasure to the brim. But her mind is made up to die; and so, with a silent prayer, and "if I perish, I perish," on her lips, she passes in, and now stands mute and pallid, yet calm and resolute outside the ring of nobles, to hear her doom.

Nor has she to endure the agony of a long suspense. Her fate, which seems to tremble in the balance, is soon determined.

No sooner does the monarch catch sight of the beautiful woman, and brave and good as beautiful, whom he had raised from slavery to share his bed and throne, than her apprehensions vanish.

The clouds break; and she finds, as we often do with Christ, that her fears have wronged her Lord.

Instantly his hand stretches out the golden sceptre; the business of the court is stopped; the queen, the queen! divides the crowd of nobles; and up that brilliant lane she walks in majesty and in charms that outvie her gems, to hear the blessed words, "What wilt thou, Queen Esther? and what is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom."

PAUL.

THE sufferings and misery which awaits the impenitent and unbelieving, God has painted in most apalling colors.

To save us from them, his Son left the heavens and died on a cross.

When Paul thought of these he wept like a woman. A dauntless man, who shook his chain in the face of kings—whose spirit no sufferings could subdue, and whose heart no dangers could appall—who stood as unmoved amid a thousand perils as ever rock amid a thousand billows—he could not contemplate these without the deepest emotion; his tears fell fast and thick upon the page where he wrote, "of whom I have told you often,

and now tell you even weeping, whose God is their belly, whose end is destruction."

To compare small things with great, something like this—but unspeakably nobler and greater—God works in salvation. For example—In John Bunyan he calls the bold leader of village reprobates to preach the gospel; a blaspheming tinker to become one of England's famous confessors; and from the gloomy portals of Bedford jail, to shed forth the luster of his sanctified and resplendent genius to the farther limits of the world, and adown the whole course of time. From the deck of a slave ship he summons John Newton to the pulpit; and by hands, defiled with Mammon's most nefarious traffic, he brings them that are bound out of darkness, and smites adamantine fetters from the slaves of sin. In Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, he converts his Son's bitterest enemy into his warmest friend. To the man whom a trembling church held most in dread, she comes to owe, under God, the weightiest obligations.

In Paul she has her boldest champion, her greatest logician, the most gallant of her defenders, her grandest preacher, the prince of apostles, the largest contributor to this imperishable volume.

How much better for these three stars to be shining in heaven, than quenched in the blackness of darkness. Better for the good of man—better for the glory of God. In them, and in all the sainted throng around them, has not God more illustriously displayed His power, than if He had crushed them by the thunders of His vengeance, and buried them in the depths of hell?

The power of Divinity culminates in grace. Oh, that

we may become its monuments, and be built up by the hands of an eternal Spirit, to the glory of the cross!

And why not? Look at these men! Think what they were; behold what they are! and, addressing your prayers to Him whose ear is never heavy that it cannot hear, nor His hand shortened that it cannot save, be this your earnest, your urgent cry, "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord. Awake, as in the ancient days in the generations of old."

More wonderful than this, however, is it to see where the grace of God will live and grow. Tender exotic! plant brought from a more congenial clime! one would suppose that it would require the kindliest nursing and propitious circumstances; yet, look here—A Daniel is bred for God, and for the bravest services in His cause, in no pious home of Israel; he grows in saintship amid the impurities and effeminacy of a heathen palace.

Paul was a persecutor, and is called to be a preacher —was a murderer and becomes a martyr; once, no pharisee so proud, now, no publican so humble. Like those fabled monsters, which, sailing on broad and scaly wings, descended on their helpless prey with streams of fire issuing from their formidable mouths, he set off for Damascus, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord."

Jesus descended in person to meet this formidable persecutor, and selected him for His chiefest apostle. He bids him wash the blood of Stephen from his hands, and go preach the gospel. And where afterwards has this very man some of his most devoted friends? where, but in Cæsar's household.

What can more strikingly express the power of all-sufficient grace than the words of John Newton? One asked him whether he thought the heathen could be converted.

"I have never doubted," he said, "that God could convert the heathen, since He converted me."

Paul, the man, in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths of—Paul, the martyr, thrice beaten with rods, once stoned, thrice shipwrecked, in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by his countrymen, by the heathen, in the city, in the wilderness, on the sea—Paul, the penitent sufferer for Christ, of a life of weariness, and painfulness, and watchings, hunger, thirst, fastings, cold, nakedness—Paul even stood alarmed, lest he himself should be a castaway. "The righteous scarcely are saved." The busiest in praying, watching, working, fighting, are no more than saved. O then, "if the righteous scarcely are saved, where shall the ungodly and the wicked appear?"

Paul said, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." He judged it best for himself to go, for others he judged it best to stay. And there are few nobler sights than to see that man, with his foot on the door-step of heaven, return to throw himself in the very thick of battle, and spend and be spent in his Master's work. The crown of martyrdom often within his reach, he drew back a hand that was eager to grasp it. He took as much care of life as the coward guilt that is

afraid to die. He was not impatient of the hardships, wounds, and watchings of the warfare, so long as he could serve the cause of Jesus. It was sin, not suffering, that he felt intolerable; and which wrung from him the bitter cry, "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

His a Savior's spirit, he chose rather that Christ should be glorified through his labors on earth, than that he himself should be glorified with Christ in heaven.

And, so long as he had a tongue to speak for Jesus, and an arm to hold high above the battle's tumult, the banner of the faith, he was willing to work on—not impatient for death and his discharge. His was a higher and more heroic wish than to get to heaven. He wished to make a heaven of earth; and, persuaded that nothing could separate him from the love of God, or, finally, from heaven, believing that all which God had said of him he would do for him, and knowing that, though the vision tarried, it would come, he possessed his soul in patience and peace—waiting for the Lord.

MOSES.

PROPPED upon pillows, bending on his staff, panting for breath, speaking in brief and broken sentences, by those groping hands that felt for Ephraim's and Manasseh's head, betraying the stone-blindness of a great old age, Jacob gave blessing to the twelve sons, who all—uncommon fortune in so large a family—survived their parent,

and were themselves the fathers of the living millions, now swarming beneath the eye of Moses.

But how different the bearing and aspect of Moses from that of the hoary patriarch!

An old man! if not as old a man, of age not much short of Jacob's! One hundred and twenty years had passed on his head, but they had neither bleached his beard nor thinned his locks, nor drawn a wrinkle on his lofty brow; that eye had lost none of its fire, nor that arm any of its force, since the day when, striking in for a brother's cause, be bestrode a prostrate Hebrew, and, parrying the blow of the Egyptian, gave it back, like a battle-axe, on his head.

Nearly the same age as Jacob, whose bent and venerable appearance, as he entered, leaning on Joseph's arm, led Pharaoh to ask, "How old art thou?"

Moses bore himself erect, and looked the same as on the day, forty years before, when he strode into Pharaoh's hall, and demanded of an angry king that the Hebrews should go free. The sun that went down in the evening of summer's longest day, sunk as full and bright, as if it had set at noon; "his eye was not dim, nor was his natural strength abated." His life closed amid the rich glories of the noblest address that grace, genius, patriotism, and piety ever uttered.

Standing on some rocky platform, with his back to the sky, and his face to the people, Moses delivered an address never forgotten, and that for long ages continued to sound its trumpet echoes into the ears, and to breathe courage into the hearts of Israel. He blessed the tribes in succession, and—charged with inspiration, as a cloud

with lightning—he bursts forth at the close into these glowing exclamations—"There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heavens in thy help; thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

Jordan gleamed in his eye, and, stretching out his arms to the land across its flood, he cried—"Israel then shall dwell in safety alone; the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; his heaven shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?"

Glorious words to the Hebrews! and most glorious in Christian eyes. Faith claims them as part of her inheritance, and, looking on that mighty multitude as the dying type of a never-dying church, serves us heirs of entail to the spiritual blessings which lay concealed beneath the vail of these earthly promises.

WOMAN.

FURNISHED with clasping tendrils, and strong by the attachments which they form, the woodbine and ivy wind their arms around the tree, embrace it closely, and rising to its lofty boughs, and clinging to its rough bark, they give ornament and beauty—a vesture of soft green spangled with flowers—in return for the support they get.

Like these, woman, with her strong and warm affec-

tions—gentle, loving, confiding—is prone to attach herself to a nature stronger than her own, and to lean on it for support.

And, whether it be that she is from this peculiar disposition less opposed to the faith which looks to another's righteousness and leans on another's strength, certain it is there is more religion among women than men.

If, on accouut of the elevation and high position which it has given her in Christian countries, woman owes much to religion, religion in turn owes most to her. You tell me that "by woman came sin?" I know it; but I set off this against the fact—by woman came the Savior. Jesus was a virgin's child. And, more than that, in those days when He walked this world, women were His trustiest, kindest friends.

Whoever betrayed, denied, deserted Him—they never did. The nearest to His cross, and earliest at His sepulcher, they were faithful when others were faithless, and gave ready promise of that devotedness to His cause, which their sex in all ages have honorably and pre-eminently displayed.

Go through our Christian households, and, I will venture to say, that you will find more women than men, more wives than husbands, more sisters than brothers, who are living under the influence of religion. Many more children are to be found, who refer their earliest, deepest religious impressions to a mother's than to a father's piety.

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT.

Lead, kindly Light,
Amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on,
The night is dark,
And I am far from home.
Lead thou me on,
Keep thou my feet,
I do not ask to see
The distant scene;
One step enough for me.

I was not ever thus,
Nor prayed that thou
Shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path;
But now Lead thou me on.
I loved the garish day,
And spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will,
Remember not past years.

So long thy power hath blessed me,
Sure it still will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen,
O'er crag and torrent,
Till the night is gone.
And with the morn
Those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since,
And lost awhile.

DESCRIBED IN METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE,
LONDON, ENGLAND, BY

C. H. SPURGEON.

ABRAHAM.

ABRAHAM had no prestige of parentage, rank, or title. If you had looked at the stately patriarch when he trod the plains of Mamre you would have seen about him a presence, a calm dignity, a truly regal manner; but that came to him solely through his faith in God and his communion with heaven. Abraham was distinguished from other men only by the grace of God. What grander difference can there be than that which is established by the existence of faith in the heart? Thus Abraham was in the fullest sense a lone man, unsupported by any of those outward distinctions which enable some men to do more than others.

I cannot help asking your attention to the fact that Abraham was not only a man called from heathendom, one man, and a lone man; but he was *a man who had to be stripped yet further*. The blessing was—"Surely blessing, I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee," but the manifest fulfillment of it was not by-and-by. He must come away from his kindred and his

father's house, and he must dwell in Palestine till the promised seed was born.

But how long he waited for the expected heir!

Twenty, yes, almost thirty years rolled away, and the man, Abraham, was ninety years old and nine.

He is very old, and yet he is to be blessed with a son. He must number the full tale of a hundred years before Isaac can be born.

This promised child was to be according to promise, and, therefore, it could not be born till nature was recognized as spent. As for Sarah—it was not possible that she should become a mother at her advanced age, and yet it must be so, for God had said it.

The believing pair had waited on till, in an evil hour, Sarah suggested a desperate attempt to fulfill the promise, in which she still firmly believed. That artifice broke down; it was part of the divine plan that it should do so. The covenant promise was not to the seed after the flesh. When that scheme had been set aside, the Lord in his own time fulfilled his word.

Joy! joy! in the house of Abraham and Sarah.

What a feast there was that Isaac was born, filling the house with laughter.

But he must die!

"Get thee up," said God, "and take thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

The grand old man will do it. He will get up early in the morning, and the father and the son will journey together silently; for the aged heart is too full to talk.

He believes God, and is sure that even if he should actually slay his son at God's command the promise would somehow be kept.

Abraham could not tell how, but it was no business of his to tell how ; he was fully persuaded that, what God had promised, he was able to perform.

God had said to him, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," and he believed that God could raise Isaac from the dead, or in some other way achieve the promise.

Thus he grasped the resurrection. He laid hold of a truth which was deeper than he knew of ; by his faith he realized resurrection for Isaac, though as yet the Lord Jesus had not shown the way by his own rising from the dead.

What a stripping Abraham had endured ! Who can describe what would have been the wretchedness of that aged parent if it had not been for his faith ! Men intensely love the children of their old age. See how a grandchild is fondled by his grandsire, and thus must Isaac have been loved by Abraham ; and yet he must die by his father's own hand.

Oh, most miserable among the miserable must he have been who stood there on Mount Moriah, called to such a duty, his heart breaking while his soul obeyed. Such, doubtless, would have been the case had not faith been his stay.

Look, then, to Abraham, your father, and say, is he not the greatest of men, the grandest human representative of the great Father God himself, who, in the fullness of time, spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all ?

Likest to God among mortal men art thou, Abraham, and therefore well mightest thou be his friend! In thy trial, brought to such a stripping, we may yet envy thee as we hear the Lord saying, "Now know I that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me."

Now, if in all these trials Abraham was yet blessed, and God's purpose was accomplished in him, can we not believe that the same God can work by us also, despite our downcastings and humiliations?

When we are utterly broken and crushed, may not the Lord's strength be made perfect in our weakness? Let us not question the promise because of our personal deadness and inability, but believe God without wavering, for he hath said, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

With great brevity, I shall dwell for a moment upon the second point, namely—*The main characteristic of this chosen man.* The text says, "Look unto Abraham, your father, and unto Sarah that bare you," and it must mean,—consider him and see what he was, that you may learn from him. You perceive at once that his grand characteristic was *his faith.* In this faith many other most brilliant qualities are comprehended, but his faith lay at the bottom of all.

Here is his epitaph: "Abraham believed God."

That was the mainspring of all his acts, the glory of his life, "Abraham believed God."

The men that God will work by, whatever else they have not, must have faith in God. Though it is to be desired that the believer should have every mental and moral qualification, yet it is astounding how, if there be

real faith, a multitude of imperfections are swallowed up, and the man is still a power.

Brethren, because we are the seed of Abraham, the apostle declares that the blessing of Abraham has come upon us also. I pray that all the friends and laborers in our Missionary Society may grasp the blessing of Abraham. What is it? It is a covenant favor that belongs to all who are the servants of God by faith.

Here is the substance of it: "Surely blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thee."

That is the grand old covenant promise, and it belongs to the church. Note that the blessing is attended with multiplying. Some friends are afraid of statistics which represent the increase of the churches; I am far more afraid of those statistics which will show that we do not increase as we could wish. The blessing of the church is the increase of the church. The two go together:

"Blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thee."

How much are Christians to be multiplied in the world? At the present time we do not seem to be increasing as fast as the population. I am afraid that the number of converted persons relatively to the population is scarcely as great as it was thirty years ago; we long to be multiplied at a very different rate from this—and we shall be if we have faith in our God.

Hear ye the covenant word: "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

These are the lines from the covenant, which is sure to all the seed, and can never be broken.

We have been called and blessed, and it is of necessity that we increase also. We are bound to increase; we are destined to overrun the nations: the Hittites, the Hivites, the Amorites, of Popery, Mahometanism, and Idolatry are in the land, but their false systems are utterly to perish.

Jesus, at the head of his people, drive them out—I mean not the men, but their evil beliefs. They may take notice to quit, for He is coming, before whom all men must bow. O that ere He himself shall appear His spiritual presence in the midst of his church might suffice for victory, that all mankind might call Him blessed.

We are bound to increase, till the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for us, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. Upon the church, in her vigor, shall yet descend the blessings of the tribes of Joseph. "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth." The success of truth is the battle of the Lord, and the increase of his church is according to his own promise, therefore in quietness we may possess our souls.

ADAM.

We never find Adam afraid of God, or any manifestation of Deity while he was in Paradise an obedient

creature, but no sooner had he touched the fatal fruit than he found that he was naked, and hid himself.

When he heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day, Adam was afraid, and hid himself from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

Sin makes miserable cowards of us all. See the man who once could hold delightful converse with his Maker, now dreading to hear his Maker's voice, and skulking in the grove like a felon, who knows his guilt, and is afraid to meet the officers of justice.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is in some senses more man than Adam. Adam was not born; Adam never had to struggle through the risks and weaknesses of infancy; he knew not the littlenesses of childhood—he was full grown at once. Father Adam could not sympathize with me as a babe and a child.

But how man-like is Jesus! He is cradled with us in the manger; he does not begin with us in mid-life, as Adam, but he accompanies us in the pains, and feebleness, and infirmities of infancy, and he continues with us even to the grave.

Beloved, this is such sweet comfort. He that is God this day was once an infant; so that if my cares are little and even trivial, and comparatively infantile, I may go to Him for He was once a child.

Though the great ones of the earth may sneer at the child of poverty, and say, "You are too mean, and your trouble is too slight for pity;" I recollect with humble joy, that the King of heaven did hang upon a woman's

breast, and was wrapped in swaddling bands, and therefore I tell Him all my griefs.

How wonderful! that He should have been an infant, and yet should be God over all, blessed for ever! I am not afraid of God now; this blessed link between me and God, the holy child of Jesus, has taken all fear away.

BALAAM.

BALAAM—"I have sinned,"—Numbers xxii. 34.

Now, for a second text. I beg to introduce to you another character—the double-minded man, who says, "I have sinned," and feels that he has, and feels it deeply, too, but who is so worldly-minded that he "loves the wages of unrighteousness."

The character I have chosen to illustrate this, is that of Balaam.

Turn to the book of numbers, the 22nd chapter and the 34th verse: "And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned."

"I have sinned," said Balaam; but yet he went on with his sin afterward. One of the strangest characters of the whole world is Balaam. I have often marvelled at that man; he seems really in another sense to have come up to the lines of Ralph Erskine—

> "To good and evil equal bect,
> And both a devil and a saint."

For he did seem to be so. At times no man could

speak more eloquently or more truthfully, and at other times he exhibited the most mean and sordid covetousness that could disgrace human nature.

Think you see Balaam; he stands upon the brow of the hill, and there lie the multitudes ot Israel at his feet; he is bidden to curse them, and he cries,

"How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?"

And, God opening his eyes, he begins to tell even about the coming of Christ, and he says, "I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh."

And then he winds up his oration by saying: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

And ye will say of that man, he is a hopeful character. Wait till he has come off the brow of the hill, and you will hear him give the most diabolical advice to the king of Moab which it was even possible for Satan himself to suggest.

Said he to the king: "You cannot overthrow these people in battle, for God is with them; try and entice them from their God."

And you know how, with wanton lusts, they of Moab tried to entice the children of Israel from allegiance to Jehovah; so that this man seemed to have the voice of an angel at one time, and yet the very soul of a devil in his bowels. He was a terrible character; he was a man of two things, a man who went all the way with two things to a very great extent.

I know, the Scripture says, "No man can serve two masters."

Now, this is often misunderstood. Some read it, "No

man can *serve two* masters." Yes he can; he can serve three or four. The way to read it is this: "No man can serve two *masters*."

They cannot both be masters. He can serve two, but they cannot both be his master. A man can serve two who are not his masters, or twenty either; he may live for twenty different purposes, but he cannot live for more than one master purpose—there can only be one master purpose in his soul.

But Balaam labored to serve two; it was like the people of whom it was said, "They feared the Lord, and served other gods." Or, like Rufus, who was a loaf of the same leaven; for you know old King Rufus painted God on one side of his shield, and the devil on the other, and had underneath the motto: "Ready for both; catch who can."

There are many such, who are ready for both. They meet a minister, and how pious and holy they are; on the Sabbath they are the most respectable and upright people in the world, as you would think; indeed, they effect a drawling in their speech, which they think to be eminently religious.

But on a week day, if you want to find the greatest rogues and cheats, they are some of those men who are so sanctimonious in their piety.

Now, rest assured that no confession of sin can be genuine, unless it be a whole-hearted one. It is of no use for you to say, "I have sinned," and then keep on sinning.

"I have sinned," say you, and it is a fair, fair face

you show; but, alas! alas! for the sin you will go away and commit.

Some men seem to be born with two characters. I remarked when in the library at Trinity College, Cambridge, a very fine statue of Lord Byron. The librarian said to me, "Stand here, sir." I looked, and I said, "What a fine intellectual countenance! What a grand genius he was!" "Come here," he said, "to the other side." "Ah! what a demon! There stands the man that could defy the deity." He seemed to have such a scowl and such a dreadful leer in his face; even as Milton would have painted Satan, when he said: "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." I turned away, and said to the librarian, "Do you think the artist designed this?" "Yes," he said, "he wished to picture the two characters—the great, the grand, the almost superhuman genius that he possessed, and yet the enormous mass of sin that was in his soul."

There are some men here of the same sort. I dare say, like Balaam, they wonld overthrow everything in argument with their enchantments; they could work miracles; and yet at the same time there is something about them which betrays a horrid character of sin, as great as that which would appear to be their character for righteousness.

Balaam, you know, offered sacrifices to God upon the altar of Baal; that was just the type of his character. So many do; they offer sacrifices to God on the shrine of Mammon; and whilst they will give to the building of a church, and distribute to the poor, they will at the other door of their counting-house grind the poor for bread,

and press the very blood out of the widow, that they may enrich themselves. Ah! it is idle and useless for you to say, "I have sinned," unless you mean it from your heart. That double-minded man's confession is of no avail.

CHRIST.

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."—Psalms ii. 8, 9.

Observe, dear friends, the wonderful contrast between the violent excitement of the enemies of the Lord, and the sublime serenity of God himself. He is not disturbed, though the heathen so furiously rage, and their kings and mighty ones set themselves in battle array.

He smiles at them; he hath them in derision. You and I are often downcast and depressed, and our forebodings are dark and dismal, but God sits in his eternal peacefulness, and serenely overrules tumult and rebellion. The Lord reigneth, and his throne is not moved, nor his rest broken, whatever may be the noise and turmoil down below.

Notice the sublimity of this divine calm.

While the heathen and their princes are plotting and planning how to break his bands asunder, and cast his cords from them, he has already defeated their devices,

and he says to them, "Yet have I set my king upon the holy hill of *Zion*."

"You will not have my Son to reign over you, but nevertheless he reigns. While you have been raging I have crowned Him. Your imaginations are indeed vain, for I have forestalled you, and established him upon his throne. Hear him as he proclaims my decree, and asserts his filial sovereignty."

God is ever beforehand with his adversaries; they find their scheming frustrated, and their craft baffled, even before they have begun to execute their plans. By God's decree the ever blessed Son of the Highest is placed in power, and exalted to his throne. The rules cannot snatch from his hand the sceptre, nor dash from his head the crown: Jesus reins and must reign till all enemies are put under his feet. God has set him firmly upon *Zion*'s hill, and raging nations cannot cast him down; the very idea of their so doing excites the derision of Jehovah, he disturbs not his great soul because of their blustering.

As if it were a banquet rather than a conflict, the Lord God, as himself a king, speaks to the King's Son, even to his Anointed on his right hand, and having owned his royal rank, confers upon him the highest honors. At great feasts many a monarch has been known to say to his favorite, "Ask what I shall give thee and nothing shall be denied thee this day."

Even thus doth the great Father say to his glorious Son, the Prince of Peace, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen, thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth, thy possession."

He bids him open his mouth wide, and requests a boundless dominion. He will give him distant nations, yea, and the whole round earth to be his kingdom.

It is in his wondrous nature as God-man Mediator that these words may be understood, for so the Apostle Paul evidently interpreted them. The mysterious sentence, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee," may refer to the deep and secret truth of the eternal filiation of our Lord, whatever that may be; but Paul quotes it in the thirteenth Acts as referring to his resurrection. Here are his words, "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

It is in resurrection power that Christ comes forth, and God gives to him to have dominion over the earth and all that is upon it. Because he liveth and was dead he hath the keys of hell and of death. By virtue of his humiliation he reigns. For the suffering of death, he is crowned with death and honor. The heavenly host proclaim his worthiness to take the book and open its seven seals, singing, "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

He descended that he might ascend above all things and fill all things; he laid aside his glory that he might be crowned with this new glory and honor, and might have all things put under his feet as the Son of man.

We speak, therefore, of Jesus Christ, the risen One, who once died, but has now risen from the tomb, and

quitted this earth for the splendors of the New Jerusalem.

Our conviction is that this same Jesus is to reign over the whole world.

I shall not enter into the question whether this will be accomplished before his second advent, or will be the result of his glorious appearing. I should not like to assert that this consummation will be reached before his advent, for that might seem to militate against our duty to watch for his coming, which may be at any moment; on the other hand, I would not venture to assert that the gospel cannot be universally victorious before his coming, because I perceive that this opinion is a pillow for many an idle head, and is ruinous to the hopeful spirit of missionary enterprise.

It is enough for me that a wide dominion will be given to our Lord at some time or other, and that assuredly his kingdom shall embrace all the nations of mankind.

The whole earth shall yet be filled with His glory; the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head and clear the world of his slimy trail.

To me, it is evident beyond all contradiction that according to the whole run of Scripture the kingdom of Christ is to extend over all parts of the earth, and over all races and conditions of men, and, therefore, I charge you never despair for the grand old cause.

An infidel notion is abroad that these different religions have sprung up at different times as developments of the religious instinct, and that they may all profitably exist side by side with ours.

It is admitted that the religion of Christ is excellent, and that it deserves a large following, but still, other

religions have their advantages and must not be despised; nay, something better than the gospel of Christ may yet be discovered.

This is the current talk in certain circles, and we would at once express our horror at it.

Jesus is not to share a divided throne.

Cast ye with abhorrence from your souls every such blasphemous thought.

Jesus must reign till all enemies are put under His feet, and to Him all rivals are enemies. If Jesus be King, He is the only Potentate. Christians are enlisted under a banner which does not brook another standard side by side with it, they serve a prince who will not share his dominion with others, who will not submit that even a province shall be rent away from his government. He shall reign for ever, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Hallelujah! Like a burst of thunder, let all hearts that love Him say, Amen.

It appears from our text that this universal dominion is to be asked for. Thus saith the Father to His glorious Son, "Ask of me, and I will give thee."

Beloved, Jesus fails not to ask. We do not doubt that he responds to the Father's invitation, and asks for his inheritance. This is the way in which the psalm before us touches upon the priestly character of Christ as combined with his kingly office. He even liveth to intercede, and a part of his daily intercession is to ask that the heathen may be his inheritance.

Now, beloved, this is a lesson to us. We belong to Christ; we are members of that body of which he is the

mystical Head, and it is ours to act with him in his life-work; as he asks, we are to ask with him.

As Jesus suffers in His people, so He pleads in them.

Let us cry day and night unto God for the coming and kingdom of our Lord. Let the throne of the Highest be surrounded by our perpetual prayers. Let us urge for the Lord Jesus his suit in the courts above, that the heathen may be his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth his possession.

We are so truly one with him that his sympathies and hopes are ours; his glory is our glory, his victory our victory, and, therefore, our supplications should naturally and spontaneously arise for him every day of our lives. Our union with him has given us a kingdom, the same kingdom as that which he claims. He himself has said it: "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." As surely as He sets His Son upon the holy hill of Zion, so surely will the Lord bring us all there. Our prayers, therefore, should daily rise together with the pleadings of the great Intercessor himself. O Lord, thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory; let thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Our text employs a figure which is very full of meaning.

"He shall break them with a rod of iron."

He breaks not the subject nations, nor the inherited heathen, but the kings of the earth who stood up and took counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed. Against these he will lift up his iron rod of stern justice and irresistible power.

Over His own inheritance He will sway a silver sceptre

of love; over His own possession He shall reign with gentleness and grace; but, as for His adversaries, He will deal with them in severity, and display His power in them.

How shall they stand out against Him?

They have formed their confederacy with great care and skill; as when men prepare clay and make it plastic for the potter's use, so have they made all things ready; they have set their design upon the wheel, and caused it to revolve in their thoughts, and with great skill they have fashioned it.

Lo, there it stands finished, and fair to look upon. Yet, at its very best, it is nothing more than a potter's vessel. It may be of the purest clay, and of such exquisite workmanship that it shall enchant every man of taste, but it attaineth to be nothing more than an earthen vessel, and, therefore, woe unto it when the rod of iron falls upon it.

Woe to all human societies and brotherhoods which are framed to resist the Lord.

Mark the conflict and its end! It is brief enough. A stroke! Where is the hope of the Lord's adversary? Gone, gone, utterly gone; only a few potsherds remain.

Oh, for such a smiting of the apostacy of Rome! Oh, for one touch of the iron rod upon the imposture of Mohammed! Oh, for a blow at Buddhism, and a back stroke at the superstition of Brahminism, and at all the idols of the heathen! Woe unto the gods of the land of Sinim in that day; a single stroke shall set the potsherds flying.

Wherefore, then, should we fear, although they plot

and plan; although a solemn conclave of cardinals be held, though the Pope fulminate his bulls, though the Sultan ordain that every convert to Christianity be put to death, though still the scoffers revile at Christianity, and say that it spreads not as once it did? A speedy answer shall confound them, or, if not speedy, yet the stroke shall be sure.

Our King waits a while. He hath leisure. Haste belongs to weakness; his strength moves calmly. Only let him be aroused and you shall see how quick are his paces.

He redeemed the world in a few short hours upon the tree, and I warrant you that when he getteth that iron rod once fairly to work, he will not need many days to ease him of his adversaries, and make a clean sweep of all that set themselves against him. If you want to see how it will be done, read, I pray you, Daniel ii. 31:

"Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay."

It was a strange conglomeration; all the metalic empires are set forth as combined in one image; which image is the embodied idea of monarchical power, which has fascinated men even to this day. The prophet goes on to say:

"Thou sawest still that a stone was cut out without hands, which smate the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces. Then was the

iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

And so it is to be; the vision is being each day fulfilled. The gospel stone, which owes nothing to human strength or wisdom, is breaking the image, and scattering all opposing powers. No system, society, confederacy, or cabinet can stand which is opposed to truth and righteousness.

I, even I, that am but of yesterday, and know nothing, have seen one of the mightiest of empires of modern times melt away on a sudden as the rime of the morning in the heat of the sun.

I have seen monarchs driven out of their tyrannies by the powers of a single man, and a free nation born as in an hour.

I have seen states which fought to hold the negro in perpetual captivity subdued by those whom they despised, while the slave has been set free.

I have seen nations chastened under evil governments, and revived when the yoke has been broken, and they have returned to the ways of righteousness and peace.

He who lives longest shall see most of this. Evil is short-lived. Truth shall yet rise above all. The Lord saith, overturn till he shall come, whose right it is, and God shall give it him.

Woe unto those that shall stand against the Lord and his Anointed, for they shall not prosper.

"Be wise, now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

It was so once. Perfect obedience to the heavenly will upon this earth will only be a return to the good old times which ended at the gate of Eden.

There was a day when no gulf was digged between earth and heaven; there was scarce a boundary line, for the God of heaven walked in Paradise with Adam. All things on earth were then pure, and true, and happy. It was the garden of the Lord. Alas, that the trail of the serpent has now defiled everything. Then earth's morning song was heard in heaven, and heaven's hallelujahs floated down to earth at eventide. Those who desire to set up the kingdom of God are not instituting a new order of things; they are restoring, not inventing.

Earth will drop into the old groove again. The Lord is King; and he has never left the throne. As it was in the beginning, so shall it be yet again. History shall, in the divinest sense, repeat itself. The temple of the Lord shall be among men, and the Lord God shall dwell among them. "Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven."

LOVE FOR SOULS.

NOTE, in the commencement, that for the sake of those lost ones, our Lord assumes a special character. The eleventh verse puts it, "The Son of man has come

to save that which was lost." He was not originally known as "the Son of man," but as "the Son of God." Before all worlds, he dwelt in the bosom of the Father, and "thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

But, in order to redeem men, the Son of the Highest became "the Son of man."

He was born of the Virgin, and by birth inherited the innocent infirmities of our nature, and bore the sufferings incident to those infirmities. Then did he also take upon himself our sin and its penalty, and therefore died upon the cross.

He was in all points made like unto his brethren. He could not be the shepherd of men without becoming like to them, and therefore the Word condescended to be made flesh.

Behold the stupendous miracle of incarnation! Nothing can excel this marvel—Immanuel, God with us!

"Being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

O lost one, conscious of your loss, take heart to-day when the name of Jesus is named in your hearing; he is God, but he is man, and as God-and-man he saves his people from their sins.

"The Son of man is come."

He was always known as "The Coming One"; but as to the salvation of the lost he has actually come. For judgment he is "The Coming One" still; but for salvation we rejoice that our Savior has already come. Quitting the assemblies of the perfect, he has been here as the Friend of publicans and sinners. From being the Lord

of angels, he has stooped to be "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

Yes, he has come; and not in vain. Those who preached the coming Savior had such a joyous message to deliver that their feet were beautiful upon the mountains, and their voices were as heavenly music; but, as for us who preach that he has come, and, coming, has finished the work which he undertook to perform—surely ours is the choicest of messages.

Our Lord Jesus has completed the atoning sacrifice, and the justifying righteousness, by which lost men are saved; happy is the preacher of such tidings, and blessed are your ears that hear them! The good Shepherd has performed all that is necessary for the salvation of the flock which his Father has given into his hands.

Beloved, let us take heart. Lost as we are, Christ has come to save us. He has come to the place of our ruin and woe. His coming and seeking will not be in vain.

Brethren, how greatly ought we to value the souls of men when Jesus, for their sake, becomes a man, and comes into this sinful world among our guilty race that he may work the salvation of the lost!

AS A SHEPHERD.

According to the text, the Shepherd goes into the mountains; among difficulties and dangers. He will do and dare for the saving of the lost; no hardships can daunt his mighty love. You know through what dark ravines he passed in saving men. You have heard what

climbing he had after proud souls, and what condescensions for despairing ones.

A sheep in the East is more light of foot than our sheep; it will leap like a gazelle, and climb the mountains like a chamois; and so are sinners very swift in transgression, and very daring in presumption. They leap in their iniquities where the children of God would shudder to follow them, even in thought. They make nothing of leaps of profanity which would curdle the blood of him that has been taught the fear of God at the feet of Jesus Christ.

Yet, the Lord Jesus went after these desperadoes.

What difficulties he conquered, what sufferings he endured, what mountains he overleaped, that he might seek and save!

O brethren, the same heart is in him still; he goes forth continually in the preaching of the Word. With many a sigh and many a groan on the part of his chosen ministers, he goes among the mountains to seek that which has gone astray. I pray that he may accept the effort of his unworthy servant this day, and bring some lost one home by means of this sermon.

To show his exertion for the lost, our Lord describes himself as *seeking with persevering diligence*. He looks this way, but sees nothing. He shades his eyes with his hand, and looks steadily! He thought he saw his sheep. There is surely a living object upon the hill-side! He gazes intently. No, it does not stir: it is a white rock! Possibly the lost sheep is in yonder gully! It is a long way to go, but he is so intent on his purpose that he is

soon there; but the sheep is not to be seen. Where can it be? He travels on with swift foot, for he does not know what may become of his sheep while he delays. Every now and then he stops; he thinks he hears a bleating. Surely it is the voice of his sheep! He is mistaken. His love makes his ear the father of sounds which are not sounds at all. He has neither seen nor heard it these long hours; but he will continue seeking till he finds it.

The concentrated omniscience of Christ is set upon a soul that goes astray, looking after it in all its evil desires and evil emotions; watching the growth of anything that looks like repentance; and observing with sorrow the hardening of its heart.

This is what our Lord is doing for those redeemed with blood, who as yet have not been carried back to the fold. He puts forth a gracious exertion of eye and mind as well as of foot and hand, toward his wandering sheep.

At the last he saves—completely saves. He has not come to make the salvation of his people possible; but to save them. He has not come to put them in the way of saving themselves, but to save them. He has not come to half save them; but to save them altogether.

When my Lord comes forth in the majesty of his sovereign grace to save a soul, he achieves his purpose, despite sin, and death, and hell.

The wolf may grind his teeth, but the Shepherd is the wolf's master. The sheep itself may for a long time have wandered, and at the last may struggle against him; but he grips its feet, and throws the creature on his

shoulders, and bears it home; for he is resolved to save it. The sheep is glad to be so borne, for with a touch the Shepherd moulds its will to his more perfect will. His grace is the triumphant energy by which the lost one is restored.

The salvation of a single soul is a mass of miracles. I have heard of a fire which consumed the shop of a jeweler, and a number of costly treasures of gold, and silver, and precious stones, were found among the ruins, caked into a conglomerate of riches.

What a salvage! Such is the salvation of a single man, it is a mass of priceless mercies melted into one inestimable ingot, dedicated to the praise of the glory of his grace who makes us to be "accepted in the Beloved," and "saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation."

When I think of the energy whieh is put forth by the Lord to save a single lost soul, I feel stirred in my heart, and I desire that your hearts should be stirred also, that we may put forth all our strength to go and find the Lord's lost ones. Let us co-operate with him in his great labor of seeking that which is lost. Oh, that the Holy Spirit may put such a spirit within us, and keep it there!

FEEDING THE MULTITUDE.

He knew what he was going to do, and so he did it naturally and did it orderly. It is not so when a man does not know what he is to provide for.

What a hurry! What a scurry! What a running to and fro!

Jesus never conducts his matters in that way. He knew what he was going to do, and, therefore, he bade the men sit down on the grass; and they sat down like so many children. Mark tells us that they sat down in rows by fifties and by hundreds: they were arranged as if each one had been specially set to his plate, and found his name laid upon it.

Moreover, there was much grass in the place, so that the hall was carpeted in a way that no firm in London could have done it. The feast was conducted as orderly as if there had been notice given seven days beforehand, and a contractor had supplied the provisions.

Nothing could have been done in a better way, and all because Jesus knew what he would do.

Moreover, he did it very joyfully.

He took bread and blessed it. He went about it with great pleasure. I should have liked to have seen his face as he looked on those poor, famishing people being fed. Like a good host, he cheered them with his smile, while he blessed them with the food.

And then he did it so plentifully, for he knew what he would do; so he did not come half provided, or stint them so that every man should have "a little."

No; he knew what he would do, and he measured their appetites exactly, a difficult thing when you have a number of hungry people to feed.

He provided all that they wanted, and afterward there was provision left for the head waiters, so that each one should have a basketful for himself; for they took up of the fragments, twelve basketfuls—one for each of the head waiters.



ADAM AND EVE.
From the Painting by Gustave Doré.

DWELLING AMONG MEN.

I THINK we may apply this illustration to Christ in his Divine Person. The Tabernacle was the type of our Lord Jesus Christ, for God dwells among men in Christ. "He tabernacled among us, and we beheld his glory." says the apostle. God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, that is to say, of this building; but the Temple of God is Christ Jesus, "in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

Our Lord is thus the Tabernacle which the Lord hath pitched, and not man; and our first and fundamental idea of him must be in his character as Redeemer. Our Lord does come to us in other characters, and in them all he is right glorious; but unless we receive him as Redeemer we have missed the essence of his character, the foundation idea of him.

As the tent in the wilderness was founded upon the redemption money, so our idea and conception of Christ must be, first of all, that "he is the propitiation of our sins;" and, I say this, though it may seem unnecessary to say it, because Satan is very crafty, and he leads many from plain truth by subtle means.

I remember a sister, who had been a member of a certain denomination, who was converted to God in this place, though she had been a professed Christian for years. She said to me, "I have hitherto believed only in Christ crucified; I worshipped him as about to come in the second Advent to reign with his people, but I never had a sense of guilt, neither did I go to him as putting away my sin; and hence I was not saved."

When she began to see herself as a sinner she found

her need of a Redeemer. Atonement must enter into our first and chief idea of the Lord Jesus.

"We preach Christ crucified"; we preach him glorified, and delight to do so; but still the main point upon which the eye of a sinner must rest, if he would have peace with God, must be Christ crucified for sin.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Do, then, my dear hearer, let the very foundation of your faith in Christ be your view of him as ransoming you from the power of sin and Satan.

Some say they admire Christ as an example, and well they may; they can never find a better; but Jesus Christ will never be truly known and followed if he is viewed only as an example, for he is infinitely more than that.

Neither can any man carry out the project of being like Christ, unless he first knows him as making atonement for sin, and as giving power to overcome sin through his blood.

Some writers have looked upon Christ from one point of view and some from another, and there is no book that is more likely to sell than a Life of Christ, but the most essential view of him is to be had from the cross foot.

No complete life of Christ has been written yet.

All the lives of Christ that have yet been written amount to about one drop of broth, while the four Evangelists are as a whole bullock. The pen of inspiration has accomplished what all the quills in the world

will never be able to do again, and there is no need they should.

However much we dwell upon the holiness of our Lord, we cannot complete his picture unless we describe him as the sinner's ransom. He is white, but he is ruddy too. Rutherford said, "O then, come and see if he be not a red man. In his suffering for us, he was wet with his own blood. Is he not well worthy of your love?"

When he comethforth in the vesture, dipped in blood, many shun him, they cannot bear the atoning sacrifice; but he is never in our eyes so matchlessly lovely as when we see him bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, and putting away transgression by making him the Substitute for his people.

THE GLORY OF GOD.

We will, for a minute or two, consider this glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ historically.

In every incident of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, the Lord's Anointed, there is much of God to be seen. What volumes upon volumes might be written to show God as revealed in every act of Christ, from his birth to his death! I see him as a babe at Bethlehem, lying in a manger, and there I perceive a choice glory in the mind of God, for he evidently despises the pomp and glory of the world, which little minds esteem so highly.

He might have been born in marble halls, and wrapped in imperial purple, but he scorns these things, and in the manger among the oxen we see a glory which is independent of the trifles of luxury and parade.

The glory of God in the person of Jesus asks no aid from the splendor of courts and palaces. Yet, even as

a babe he reigns and rules. Mark how the shepherds hasten to salute the new-born King, while the magi from the far-off East bring gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and bow at his feet.

When the Lord condescends to show himself in little things he is still right royal, and commands the homage of mankind. He is as majestic in the minute as in the magnificent, as royal in the babe at Bethlehem as in after days in the man who rode through Jerusalem with hosannas. See the holy child, Jesus, in the temple when he is but twelve years old, sitting in the midst of the doctors, astonishing them with his questions!

What wisdom there was in that child! Do you not see therein an exhibition of the truth that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men"? Even when God reserves his wisdom, and gives forth utterances fitted for a child, he baffles the wisdom of age and thought.

Watch that youth in the carpenter's shop.

See him planing and sawing, cutting and squaring, working according to his parent's command, till he is thirty years of age.

What learn we here when we see the incarnate God tarrying at the workman's bench? See we not how God can wait? Is not this a masterly display of the leisure of the Eternal? The Infinite is never driven out of his restful pace of conscious strength.

Had it been you and I, we should have hastened to begin our life-work long before; we could not have refrained from preaching and teaching for so long a period; but God can wait, and in Christ we see how prudence

tempered zeal, and made him share in that eternal leisure which arises out of confidence that his end is sure.

The Godhead was concealed at Bethlehem and Nazareth from the eyes of carnel men; but it is revealed to those who have spiritual sight wherewith to behold the Lord. Even in those early days of our Lord, while yet he was preparing for his great mission, we behold the glory of God in his youthful face, and we adore.

As for his public ministry, how clearly the Godhead is there!

Behold him, brethren, while he feeds five thousand with a few loaves and fishes, and you cannot fail to perceive therein the glory of God in the commissariat of the universe; for the Lord God openeth his hand and supplieth the lack of every living thing.

See him cast out devils, and learn the divine power over evil. Hear him raise the dead, and reverence the divine prerogative to kill and to make alive. See him cure the sick, and think you hear Jehovah say, "I wound, I heal." Hear how he speaks, and infallibly reveal the truth, and you will perceive the God of knowledge to whom the wise-hearted owe their instruction.

Set over against each other these two sentences: "Behold, God exalteth by his power; who teacheth like him?" and "Never man spake like this man."

It is ever the Lord's way to make his truth known to those of humble and truthful hearts, and so did Jesus teach the sincere and lowly among men, wearing the common smock-frock of the peasant, entering their cottages, and sharing their poverty. Mark how he even washed his disciples' feet.

Herein we see the condescension of God, who must stoop to view the skies, and bow to see what angels do, and yet does not disdain to visit the sons of men. In wondrous grace he thinks of us, and has pity upon our low estate.

See, too, the Christ of God, my brethren, bearing every day with the taunts of the ungodly, enduring "such contradiction of sinners against himself," and you have a fair picture of the infinite patience and the marvelous long suffering of God, and this is no small part of his glory.

Note well how Jesus loved his own which were in the world, yea, loved them to the end, and with what tenderness and gentleness he bore with them, as a nurse with her child, for here you see the tenderness and gentleness of God, and the love of the great Father towards his erring children.

You read of Jesus receiving sinners and eating with them, and what is this but the Lord God, merciful and gracious, passing by transgression, iniquity, and sin?

You see Jesus living as a physician among those diseased by sin, with the one aim of healing their sicknesses; and here you see the pardoning mercy of our God, his delight in salvation, and the joy which he has in mercy.

Beloved, I cannot go through the whole life of Jesus Christ, it were impossible, for time would fail us; but, if you will yourselves select any single incident in which Jesus appears, whether in the chamber of sickness or at the grave, whether in weakness or in power, you shall in each case behold the glory of God.

Throughout his ministry, which was mainly a period

of humiliation, there gleams forth in the character, acts, and person of Jesus the glory of the everlasting Father. His acts compel us not only to admire, but to adore; he is not merely a man whom God favors, he is God himself.

What shall I say of his death?

Oh, never did the love of God reveal itself so clearly as when he laid down his life for his sheep, nor did the justice of God ever flame forth so conspicuously as when he would suffer in himself the curse for sin rather than sin should go unpunished, and tbe law should be dishonored.

Every attribute of God was focussed at the cross, and he that hath eyes to look through his tears, and see the wounds of Jesus, shall behold more of God there than a whole eternity of providence or an infinity of creation shall ever be able to reveal to him. Well might the trembling centurion, as he watched the cross, exclaim, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

Shall I need to remind you, too, of the glory of God in the person of Christ Jesus in his resurrection, when he spoiled principalities and powers, led death captive, and rifled the tomb.

That is indeed a Godlike speech, "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death."

His power, his immortality, his eternal majesty, all shone forth as he left the shades of death.

I will not linger over his ascension when he returned to his own again. Then his Godhead was conspicuous,

for he again put on the glory which he had with the Father before ever the world was. Then, amid the acclamations of angels and redeemed spirits, the glory of the conquering Lord was seen. By his descent he had destroyed the powers of darkness, and then he ascended, that he might fill all things, as only God can do.

I would only hint at his session at the right hand of God, for there you know how—

> "Adoring saints around him stand,
> And thrones and powers before him fall;
> The God shines gracious through the Man,
> And sheds sweet glories on them all."

In heaven they never conceive of Jesus apart from the divine glory which perpetually surrounds him. No one in heaven doubts his deity, for all fall prostrate before him, or anon all seize their harps and wake their strings to the praise of God and the Lamb.

In the person of Jesus, we see the glory of God in the veiling of his splendor. The Lord is not eager to display himself: "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, said the prophet of old." The world seems to be created rather to hide God than to manifest him: at least, it is certain that even in the grandest displays of his power we may say with Job, "There was the hiding of his power."

Though his light is brightness itself, yet it is only the robe which conceals him. "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment."

If thus God's glory is seen in the field of creation as a light veiled and shaded to suit the human eye, we cer-

tainly see the like in the face of Jesus Christ, where everything is mild and gentle—full of grace as well as truth. How softly breaks the divine glory through the human life of Jesus: a babe in grace may gaze upon this brightness without fear.

When Moses' face shone, the people could not look thereon; but, when Jesus came from his transfiguration, the people ran to him and saluted him. Everything is attractive in God in Christ Jesus. In him we see God to the full, but the Deity so mildly beams through the medium of human flesh that mortal man may draw near, and look, and live.

This glory in the face of Jesus Christ is assuredly the glory of God, even though veiled; for thus in every other instance doth God in measure shine forth. In providence and in nature such a thing as an unveiled God is not to be seen, and the revelation of God in Christ is after the same divine manner.

In our Lord Jesus we see the glory of God in the wondrous blending of the attributes. Behold his mercy, for he dies for sinners; but see his justice, for he sits as judge of quick and dead. Observe his immutability, for he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; and see his power, for his voice shakes not only earth, but also heaven. See how infinite is his love, lor he espouses his chosen; but how terrible his wrath, for he consumes his adversaries.

All the attributes of Deity are in him: power that can lull the tempest, and tenderness that can embrace little children. The character of Christ is a wonderful

combination of all perfections, making up one perfection; and, so we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, for this is God's glory, that in him nothing is excessive and nothing is deficient. He is all that is good and great; in him is light, and no darkness at all.

Say, is it not so seen iu Jesus our Lord?

ELISHA.

ELISHA needed that the Holy Spirit should come upon him to inspire him with prophetic utterances.

"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

We need that the hand of the Lord should be laid upon us, for we can never open our mouths in wisdom except we are under the divine touch. Now, the Spirit of God works according to his own will. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," and the Spirit of God operates as he chooseth.

Elisha could not prophesy just when he liked; he must wait until the Spirit of God came upon him, and the Spirit of God could come or not, even as he pleased. Elisha had noticed that the Spirit of God acted upon him most freely when his mind was restful and subdued. He found himself best prepared for the heavenly voice when the noise within his soul was hushed, and every disturbing emotion was quieted. Having ascertained this fact by observation, he acted upon it. He could not

create the wind of the Spirit, but he could set his sail to receive it, and he did so.

At the time alluded to, Elisha had been greatly irritated by the sight of Jehoram, the king of Israel, the son of Ahab and Jezebel.

In the true spirit of his old master, Elijah, the prophet let Jehoram know what he thought of him; and, having delivered his soul, he very naturally felt agitated and distressed, and unfit to be the mouthpiece for the Spirit of God. He knew that the hand of the Lord would not rest upon him while he was in that state, and therefore he said, "Bring me a minstrel."

The original Hebrew conveys the idea of a man accustomed to play upon the harp. Listening to the dulcet tones which were produced by a skillful harper, who very likely sang one of David's psalms to the music, the prophet waited awhile, and then the hand of the Lord came upon him.

Under the influence of minstrelsy his mind grew quiet, his agitation subsided, his thoughts were collected, and the Spirit of God spake through him. It was a most commendable thing for him to use the means which he had found at other times helpful, though still his sole reliance was upon the hand of the Lord.

It would seem from a passage in the First Book of Samuel that Elisha was not the only prophet who had found music helpful, for we read, "Thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy." Elisha, like his

predecessors, only used a natural means for putting himself into readiness for receiving supernatural help.

Let us see if we can bring forth the practical lesson which this incident may teach us.

Here is a lesson to those who wish to serve God, and to speak in his name. *Let us strive to be in a fit state for the Lord's work.* If we know of anything that will put our mind into such a condition that the Spirit of God is likely to work upon us and speak through us, let us make use of it.

Elisha cried, "Bring me a minstrel"; let us also say —bring me that which will be helpful to me. The harper could be of no service to Elisha for bringing him inspiration, but by putting him into a calm, equable state of mind, he prepared him for the heavenly communication, and removed from his soul that which would have hindered the divine working.

It is very evident that we, too, like the prophet, have our hindrances. We are at times unfit for the Master's use. Our minds are disarranged, the machinery is out of order, the sail is furled, the pipe is blocked us, the whole soul is out of gear.

The hindrance in Elisha's case came from his surroundings. He was in a camp; a camp where three nations mixed their discordant voices; a noisy, ill-disciplined camp, and a camp ready to perish for thirst. There was no water, and the men-at-arms were perishing; the confusion and clamor must have been great. Prophetic thought could scarcely command itself amid the uproar, the discontent, the threatening from thousands of thirsty men.

Three kings had waited on the prophet; but this would not have disconcerted him had not one of them been Jehoram, the son of Ahab, and Jezebel.

What memories were awakened in the mind of Elijah's servant by the sight of the man in whom the proud dame of Sidon and her base-minded consort lived again. Naboth's vineyard must have come to his mind, and the stern threat of Elijah—"The dogs shall eat Jezəbel by the wall of Jezreel." "For there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel, his wife, stirred up."

Elisha acted rightly, and bravely.

When he saw Jehoram coming to him for help, he challenged him thus—"What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother."

When the king humbly and with bated breath confessed that he saw the hand of Jehovah in bringing the three kings together, the prophet scarcely moderated his tone, but exclaimed, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee."

It was fit that he should be in that temper; the occasion demanded it. Still it was not a fit preface to the inward whisper of the Spirit of God, and the prophet did not feel ready for his work: the circumstances were not soothing or elevating, so he said, "Bring me a minstrel."

Do you not occasionally find yourself in an unhappy position? You have to preach, or to teach a class in

school, or to carry an edifying word to a sick person; but everything distracts you. What with noise, or domestic trouble, or sinful neighbors, or the railing words of some wicked man, you cannot get into a fit frame of mind. You have had a duty to do which has caused you much pain and disquietude, and you cannot get over it, for everything conspires to worry you. Little things grieve great minds. The very sight of some individuals will throw a preacher off the rails. I know that the height of the pulpit, the thinness of the audience, the sleepiness of a hearer, or the heaviness of the atmosphere, may put the preacher's heart out of tune, and incapacitate him for the blessing. Yes, we have our hindrances, even as Elisha had.

Elisha's hindrances lay mainly in his inward feelings: he could not feel the hand of the Lord upon him until the inner warfare had been pacified. He burned with indignation at the sight of the son of Jezebel, and flashed words of flame into his face, and, as I have already said, he was justified in so doing; but still the excitement marred the holy peace in which he usually lived, and he did not feel in a right condition to speak in the name of the Lord.

Anger, even if it be of the purest kind, is a great disturber of the heart; it ruffles all our garments, and makes us unfit to minister before the Lord. I know of nothing that is more likely to put a man out of order for the communications of the Spirit of God than indignation. Even though we may be able to say, "I do well to be angry," yet it is a very trying emotion. The unruffled lake reflects the skies, but if it be tossed with

tempest even the purest water becomes a broken mirror; even thus in the quiet of the soul the thoughts of God's Spirit are reflected, while in the rush of indignation they are broken and confused.

GOD.

Let us joyfully recollect that the Lord our God has not changed, nay, not in one jot or tittle. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

There is so far a change in the revelation of Him, that it is brighter now in the person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, than it could have been through seer and vision; but that should be a motive for increased faith. "His arm is not shortened that He cannot save, neither is His ear heavy that He cannot hear."

This God of Abraham is still mighty, and still in the midst of the covenanted ones. If the ages that have passed over His awful brow could wrinkle it and His strength could decay, then might we also decline in our confidence; but it is not so. He fainteth not, neither is weary. Our behavior towards him, therefore, should resemble that of Abraham; and especially, representing, as we do, many of us, the churches of Jesus Christ as ministers or deacons, we must never dishonor the Lord by unbelief. Doubt everything but God. Let God be true and every man a liar. This the everlasting decree which none can change,—Christ must reign: he shall

see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied; the kings of the earth must bow before him. Do not doubt it, for God hath sworn by His own life that all flesh shall see His glory. Here is the grand argument for strong faith.

What marvelous things hath God done on the face of the earth since Abraham's days!—the stupendous marvel of incarnation, the height and depth of which none of us can measure; the wondrous work of redemption, the highest, grandest, divinest achievement of the Deity—all this is done; what may we expect after this? You know more of God than Abraham could know; I beseech you, then, trust Him, at least up to the level of the patriarch. How shall we forge an excuse if we do not? What can excuse us if we distrust so glorious a God.

See the patience of His infinite majesty,—He sits in calm glory upon His eternal throne. The nations furiously rage and imagine a vain thing: "He that sitteth in the heavens doth laugh; the Lord doth have them in derision."

Still are His purposes fulfilled, and his soul abides in its serenity; He is the same, and of His years there is no end. He sitteth as a King, observe, upon a throne; He never renounces His sovereignty and domain. All things still feel the omnipotence of the reign of God.

"The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all." The rebellions of men, can they ever shake His firm dominion? No, but out of their wildest uproar He fashioneth order, and by their most violent resistance He worketh His own purposes. After all, the Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice,



THE BETRAYAL.—From the Painting by Gustave Doré.

let the multitudes of the isles be glad thereof. Still, despite all the hurly-burly of war, and all the wickedness of men in the dark places of the earth, and the detestable blasphemies of the heathen against the Most High, the Lord sitteth on a throne which never can be shaken.

If you choose to take the text as referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, what a delight it is for us to think that there is no more for Him the thorny crown, and the cruel lance, and the contemptuous spittle, but he who bowed his head to death has left the dead, no more to die, and ascended to the right hand of God, even the Father; God having highly exalted him, so that he now sitteth upon a throne high and lifted up. This, in fact, is the origin of our commission—"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Because all power is given unto him in heaveu and in earth, therefore we are to go forth and subdue the people under his feet. O when will his church fully believe in the glory of her Lord, and rejoice therein, so that His power shall fill her, as his train atoretime filled the temple. If we cannot behold His greatest glories, yet we pray that His presence by the Holy Spirit. like the perfumed smoke and the resplendent skirts of his robes, may be known among us and fill us with adoration. Did the posts of the door move at that august presence? Let our hearts be moved also as, in lowliest adoration, we bow before Him who is Lord and Christ.

But then Isaiah saw also the court of the great King; he beheld the glorious attendants who perpetually per-

form homage, nearest to His throne. He says, "Above it (or rather above him) stood the seraphims," not implying that their feet rested upon the earth, or upon any other solid substance, but that they were stationary around and above the great King, poised in mid air in a circle, like a rainbow round about the throne, or as a body guard surrounding the throne of majesty. There were they, waiting to know his pleasure, on the wing, ready for any errand, and adoring while they waited. These seraphims may furnish us with a pattern for Christian service: as the throne of God becomes the impulse to that service, so let these serve us as the model. They dwell near the Lord, and even so should we; he is their centre and their bliss, even so should he be ours. But I specially note that they were burning ones, for such is the meaning of the word seraphims, a term applied in the Hebrew to the fiery flying serpents of the wilderness. These courtiers of the great King were creatures of fire, ablaze with ardour; all glowing and shining, they worship him, "who maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flame of fire."

Jehovah, who is a consuming fire, can only fitly be served by those who are on fire, whether they be angels or men. Hence that solemn question, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Is. xxxiii. 14). None can do this but the man on fire with love divine.

Again, another part of the vision of Isaiah in the temple was the perpetual song, for these sacred beings continually cried, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory."

Brothers and sisters, let us take this cry to be the life song of each one of us. Adore ye the holy God, perfection's self. Whatever He shall do with you, bless Him, and call Him holy still. Find no fault with His dispensations; never dare to quarrel with any of His ways. Holy, holy, holy is he in all things. In creation, providence, and redemption he is holy, holy, holy.

Praise Him with ardor; be not content to call him holy once, but dwell upon the theme. Extol the Lord with all your might; raise again, and again, and again the sacred song. Adore not alone the Father, but the Son, and the ever-blessed Spirit; let the Trinity in Unity be the object of your perpetual adoration.

> "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
> Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
> Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
> God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!"

While you praise His holiness, do not forget His power, but adore Him as "Jehovah of hosts." He is as great as He is good, as high as He is holy, as potent as He is pure. He created the heavens, and the earth, and all the host of them. Legions of angels do His bidding; hosts of intelligences wait His call; all forces of nature, animate and inanimate, march at His command; from the crash of thunder to the flight of an insect all things are at his beck. Hosts of birds migrate at His direction, hosts of fishes swarm the sea at His call, hosts of locusts and caterpillars devour the fields at His order. His armies are innumerable, and all living things are in their regiments a part of His camp, which is very great. Men, also, whether they will or not, shall be subservient to His

supreme dominion; their armies and their navies fulfill His decrees even when they think not of Him. He is Lord of all.

Exult in this, and let your hearts be brave because of it.

HAGAR AND ISHMAEL.

BRIEFLY, let us rehearse the circumstances.

The child, Isaac, was, according to God's word, to be the heir of Abraham. Ishmael, the elder son of Abraham, by the bond-woman, Hagar, resided at home with his father till he was about eighteen years of age; but when he began to mock and scoff at the younger child, whom God had ordained to be the heir, it became needfnl that he and his mother should be sent away from Abraham's encampment.

It might have seemed unkind and heartless to have sent them forth, but God, having arranged to provide for them, sent a divine command, which at once rendered their expulsion necessary, and certified its success.

We may rest assured that whatever God commands he will be quite certain to justify. He knew it would be no cruelty to Hagar or Ishmael to be driven into independence, and he gave a promise which secured them everything which they desired.

"Also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a great nation;" and again, "I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly;

twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation."

Had they both been able to go forth from Abraham's tent in faith they might have trodden the desert with joyous footstep, fully assured that he who bade them go, and he who promised that he wonld bless them, would be certain to provide all things needful for them.

Early in the morning they were sent forth on their journey, with as much provision as they could carry, and probably they intended to make their way to Egypt, from whence Hagar had come.

They may have lost their way; at any rate, they are spoken of as wandering. Their store of food became exhausted, the water in the skin bottle was all spent; both of them felt the fatigue of the wilderness, and the heat of the pitiless sand; they were both faint and weary, and the younger utterly failed. As long as the mother could sustain the tottering, fainting footsteps of her boy, she did so; when she could do so no longer, he swooned with weakness, and she laid him down beneath the slight shade of the desert tamarisk, that he might be, as far as possible, screened from the excessive heat of the sun.

Looking into his face, and seeing the pallor of coming death gathering upon it, knowing her inability to do anything whatever to revive him, or even to preserve his life, she could not bear to sit and gaze upon his face, but withdrew just far enough to be able still to watch with all a mother's care. She sat down in the brokenness of her spirit, her tears gushed forth in torrents, and heart-rending cries of agony startled the rocks around.

It was needful that the high spirit of the mother and

her son should be broken down before they received prosperity; the mother had been, on a former occasion, graciously humbled by being placed in much the same condition, but she had probably relapsed into a haughty spirit, and had encouraged her boy in his insolence to Sarah's son, and, therefore, she must be chastened yet again; and it was equally needful that the high-spirited lad should for a while bear the yoke in his youth, and that he who would grow up to be the wild man, the father of the unconquerable Arab, should feel the power of God ere he received the fulfillment of the promise given to him in answer to Abraham's prayer.

If I read the text aright, while the mother was thus weeping, the child, almost lost to all around, was nevertheless conscious enough of his own helpless condition, and sufficiently mindful of his father's God, to cry in his soul to heaven for help; and the Lord heard not so much the mother's weeping (for the feebleness of her faith, which ought to have been stronger in memory of a former deliverance, hindered her prayer), but the silent, unuttered prayers of the fainting lad went up into the ears of Elohim, and the angel of Elohim appeared and pointed to the well. The child received the needful draught of water, was soon restored, and in him and his posterity the promise of God received and continues to receive a large fulfillment.

I am not about to speak upon that narrative except as it serves me with an illustration for the subject which I would now press upon you.

Behold the compassion of a mother for her child expiring with thirst, and remember that such a compassion

ought all Christians to feel towards souls that are perishing for lack of Christ, perishing eternally, perishing without hope of salvation. If the mother lifted up her voice and wept, so also should we; and if the contemplation of her dying child was all too painful for her, so may the contemplation of the wrath to come, which is to pass upon every soul that dies impenitent, become too painful for us, but yet at the same time, it should stimulate us to earnest prayer and ardent effort for the salvation of our fellow men.

JESUS.

ANGELS PRAISING.

"GLORY to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."—Luke ii. 14.

First, then, in the words of our text. There are many instructive thoughts.

The angels sang something which men could understand—something which men ought to understand—something which will make men much better if they will understand it. The angels were singing about Jesus who was born in the manger. We must look upon their song as being built upon this foundation. They sang of Christ, and the salvation which he came into this world to work out. And what they said of this salvation was this: they said, first, that it gave glory to God; secondly, that it gave peace to man; and, thirdly, that it was a token of God's good will towards the human race.

First, they said that this salvation gave glory to God. They had been present on many august occasions, and they had joined in many a solemn chorus to the praise of their Almighty Creator. They were present at the creation: "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." They had seen many a planet fashioned between the palms of Jehovah, and wheeled by His eternal hands through the infinitude of space. They had sung solemn songs over many a world which the Great One had created. We doubt not, they had often chanted "Blessing and honor, and glory, and majesty, and power, and dominion, and might, be unto Him that sitteth on the throne," manifesting himself in the work of creation. I doubt not, too, that their songs had gathered force through ages. As when first created, their first breath was song, so when they saw God create new worlds then their song received another note; they rose a little higher in the gamut of adoration. But this time, when they saw God stoop from his throne, and become a babe, hanging upon a woman's breast, they lifted their notes higher still; and, reaching to the uttermost stretch of angelic music, they gained the highest notes of the divine scale of praise, and they sang, "Glory to God *in the highest*," for higher in goodness they felt God could not go.

Thus their highest praise they gave to Him in the highest act of his godhead. If it be true that there is a hierarchy of angels, rising tier upon tier in magnificence and dignity—if the apostle teaches us that there be "angels, and principalities, and powers, and thrones, and dominions," amongst these blest inhabitants of the

upper world—I can suppose that, when the intelligence was first communicated to those angels that are to be found upon the outskirts of the heavenly world, when they looked down from heaven and saw the new-born babe, they sent the news backward to the place whence the miracle first proceeded, singing

"Angels, from the realms of glory,
Wing your downward flight to earth,
Ye who sing creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth;
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King."

And, as the message ran from rank to rank, at last the presence angels, those four cherubim that perpetually watch around the throne of God—those wheels with eyes—took up the strain, and, gathering up the song of all the inferior grades of angels, surmounted the divine pinnacle of harmony with their own solemn chant of adoration, upon which the entire host shouted, "The highest angels praise thee"—"Glory to God in the highest."

Ah, there is no mortal that can ever dream how magnificent was that song. Then, note, if angels shouted before and when the world was made, their hallelujahs were more full, more strong, more magnificent, if not more hearty, when they saw Jesus Christ born of the Virgin Mary to be man's redeemer—"Glory to God in the highest."

SON OF GOD.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a child is given."—Isaiah ix. 6.

Upon other occasions I have explained the main part

of this verse—"the government shall be upon his shoulders, his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God." If God shall spare me, on some future occasion I hope to take the other titles, "The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." But now the portion which will engage our attention is this, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." The sentence is a double one, but it has in it no tautology. The careful reader will soon discover a distinction; and it is not a distinction without a difference. "Unto us a *child* is *born*, unto us a *Son* is *given*."

As Jesus Christ is a child in his human nature, he is born, begotten of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. He is as truly born, as certainly a child, as any other man that ever lived upon the face of the earth. He is thus in his humanity a child born.

But as Jesus Christ is God's Son, he is not born, but given, begotten of his Father from before all worlds, begotten—not made, being of the same substance with the Father. The doctrine of the eternal affiliation of Christ is to be received as an undoubted truth of our holy religion. But, as to any explanation of it, no man should venture thereon, for it remaineth among the deep things of God—one of those solemn mysteries, indeed, into which the angels dare not look, nor do they desire to pry into it—a mystery which we must not attempt to fathom, for it is utterly beyond the grasp of any finite being. As well might a gnat seek to drink in the ocean, as a finite person to comprehend the Eternal God. A God whom we could understand would be no God. If

we could grasp him he could not be infinite; if we could understand him, then were he not divine.

Jesus Christ, then, I say, as a Son, is not born to us, but given. He is a boon bestowed on us, "For God so loved the world, that He *sent* His only begotten *Son* into the world." He was not born in this world as God's Son, but he was *sent*, or was given, so that you clearly perceive that the distinction is a suggestive one, and conveys much good truth to us. "Unto us *a ehild* is *born*, unto us a *Son* is *given*."

According to the text they were not to fear, first of all, because the angel had come to bring them good news. How does it run? It says, "I bring you good tidings of great joy." But what was this gospel? Further on we are told that the gospel was the fact that Christ was born. So, then, it is good news to men that Christ was born, that God has come down and taken manhood into union with himself. Verily this is glad tidings.

He, who made the heavens, slumbers in a manger. What then? Why, then, God is not of necessity an enemy to man. because here is God actually taking manhood into alliance with Deity.

There cannot be permanent, inveterate, rooted enmity between the two natures, or otherwise the divine nature could not have taken the human into hypostatical union with itself. Is there not comfort in that? Thou art a poor, erring, feeble man, and that which makes thee afraid of the Lord is this fear that there is an enmity between God and man, but there need not be such enmity, for thy Maker has actually taken manhood into union with himself.

Dost thou not see another thought? The Eternal seems to be so far away from us. He is infinite, and we are such little creatures. There appears to be a great gulf fixed between man and God, even on the ground of creatureship. But observe, he who is God has also become man. We never heard that God took the nature of angels into union with himself; we may therefore say that between Godhead and angelhood there must be an infinite distance still; but here the Lord has actually taken manhood into union with himself; there is therefore no longer a gulf fixed, on the contrary, here is a marvelous union; Godhead has entered into marriage bonds with manhood. O my soul, thou dost not stand now like a poor lone orphan wailing across the deep sea after thy Father who has gone far away and cannot hear thee; thou dost not now sob and sigh like an infant left naked and helpless, its Maker having gone too far away to regard its wants or listen to its cries.

No, thy Maker has become like thyself. Is that too strong a word to use? He without whom was not anything made that was made is that same Word who tabernacled among us and was made flesh, made flesh in such a way that he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

O manhood, was there ever such news as this for thee! Poor manhood, thou weak worm of the dust, far lower than the angels, lift up thy head, and be not afraid! Poor manhood, born in weakness, living in toil, covered with sweat, and dying at last to be eaten by the worms, be not thou abashed even in the presence of seraphs, for next to God is man, and not even an archangel can come

in between; nay, not next to God, there is scarcely that to be said, for Jesus, who is God, is man also; Jesus Christ, eternally God, was born, and lived, and died as we also do. That is the first word of comfort to expel our fear.

Remember one thing, that all the words of God in the Old Testament and the New refer to Christ; and what is more, that all the words of God have an opened window towards Christ. Yes, I say that in the creation of the world the central thought of God was his Son Jesus, and he made the world with a view to his death, resurrection, and glorious reign.

From every midge that dances in the summer sunbeam up to the great leviathan in the sea, the whole design of the world worketh toward the seed in whom the earth is blessed. In providence it is just the same; every event, from the fall of a leaf to the rise of a monarchy, is linked with the kingdom of Jesus. I have not time to show this, but it is so; and if you choose to think it over, you will clearly perceive it.

He set the bonds of the nations according to the children of Israel, and everything that has happened or ever shall happen in the outside world, all has a look towards the Christ, and that which comes of the Christ. I love to find Jesus everywhere,—not by twisting the Psalms and other Scriptures to make them speak of Christ when they do nothing of the kind, but by seeing him where he truly is.

I would not err as Cocceius did, of whom they said his great fault was that he found Christ everywhere; but I would far rather err in his direction than have it said

of me, as of another divine of the same period, that I found Christ nowhere.

Would it not be better to see him where he is not than to miss him where he is? The pattern of the things on earth is in heaven; is, in fact, in Jesus, the Son of God. He is the pattern according to which the Tabernacle and the Temple were builded; ay, and the pattern according to which this brave world was made, and worlds which are yet to be revealed. All the treasures of the wisdom of God are hidden in Christ, and in Christ they are made manifest. I do not wonder, therefore, that this passage in Hosea should point to him.

It is certain that our blessed Lord is in the highest sense the Son of God. "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Write the word SON in capitals,—and it must mean bim: it cannot with emphasis mean anyone else. I would rather give up the idea that Hosea even thought of Israel, than think that the Holy Spirit did not intend that we should see Jesus in those memorable words, "My Son."

IN THE MANGER.

I shall commence by remarking that there were other reasons why Christ should be laid in the manger.

1. I think it was intended thus to show forth his humiliation. He came, according to prophecy, to be "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" he was to be "without form or comeliness," "a root out of a dry ground."

Would it have been fitting that tbe man who was to die naked on the cross should be robed in purple at his birth? Would it not have been inappropriate that the

Redeemer who was to be buried in a borrowed tomb should be born anywhere but in the humblest shed, and housed anywhere in the most ignoble manner? The manger and the cross standing at the two extremities of the Savior's earthly life seem most fit and congruous, the one to the other. He is to wear through life a peasant's garb; he is to associate with fishermen; the lowly are to be his disciples; the cold mountains are often to be his only bed; he is to say, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head;" nothing, therefore, could be more fitting than that in his season of humiliation, when he laid aside all his glory, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and condescended even to the meanest estate, he should be laid in a manger.

2. By being in a manger he was declared to be the king of the poor. They, doubtless, were at once able to recognize his relationship to them, from the position in which they found him. I believe it excited feelings of the tenderest brotherly kindness in the minds of the shepherds, when the angels said—"This shall be a sign unto you; you shall find the child wrapped in swaddling-clothes and lying in a manger."

In the eyes of the poor, imperial robes excite no affection, but a man in their own garb attracts their confidence. With what pertinacity will workingmen cleave to a leader of their own order, believing in him because he knows their toils, sympathizes in their sorrows, and feels an interest in all their concerns. Great commanders have readily won the hearts of their soldiers by sharing their hardships and roughing it as if they belonged

to the ranks. The King of Men, who was born in Bethlehem, was not exempted in his infancy from the common calamities of the poor, nay, his lot was even worse than theirs.

I think I hear the shepherds comment on the manger-birth, "Ah!" said one to his fellow, "then he will not be like Herod, the tyrant; he will remember the manger and feel for the poor; poor, helpless infant, I feel a love for him even now, what miserable accommodation this cold world yields its Savior; it is not a Cæsar that is born to-day; he will never trample down our fields with his armies, or slaughter our flocks with his courtiers, he will be the poor man's friend, the people's monarch; according to words of our shepherd-king, he shall judge the poor of the people; he shall save the children of the needy."

Surely the shepherds, and such as they—the poor of the earth, perceived at once that here was the plebian king; noble in descent, but still as the Lord hath called him, "one chosen out of the people."

Great Prince of Peace! the manger was thy royal cradle! Therein wast thou presented to all nations as Prince of our race, before whose presence there is neither barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but thou art Lord of all.

Kings, your gold and silver would have been lavished on him if ye had known the Lord of Glory, but inasmuch as ye knew him not, he was declared with demonstration to be a leader and a witness to the people. The things which are not, under him shall bring to nought the things that are, and the things that are despised which God hath chosen, shall, under his leadership

break in pieces the might, and pride, and majesty of human grandeur.

3. Further, in thus being laid in a manger, he did, as it were, give an invitation to the most humble to come to him. We might tremble to approach a throne, but we cannot fear to approach a manger. Had we seen the Master at first riding in state through the streets of Jerusalem, with garments laid in the way, and the palm-branches strewed, and the people crying, "Hosanna!" we might have thought, though even the thought would have been wrong, that he was not approachable. Even there, riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass, he was so meek and lowly, that the young children clustered about him with their boyish "Hosanna!"

Never could there be a being more approachable than Christ. No rough guards pushed poor petitioners away; no array of officious friends were allowed to keep off the importunate widow or the man who clamored that his son might be made whole; the hem of his garment was always trailing where sick folks could reach it, and he himself had a hand always ready to touch the disease, an ear to catch the faintest accents of misery, a soul going forth everywhere in rays of mercy, even as the light of the sun streams on every side beyond that orb itself. By being laid in a manger he proved himself a priest taken from among men, one who has suffered like his brethren, and therefore can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.

Of him it was said, "He doth eat and drink with publicans and sinners;" "this man receiveth sinners and

eateth with them." Even as an infant, by being laid in a manger, he was set forth as the sinner's friend.

Come to him, ye that are weary and heavy laden! Come to him, ye that are broken in spirit, ye who are bowed down in soul! Come to him, ye that despise yourselves and are despised of others! Come to him, publican and harlot! Come to him, thief and drunkard! In the manger there he lies, unguarded from your touch and unshielded from your gaze. Bow the knee, and kiss the Son of God; accept him as your Savior, for he puts himself into that manger that you may approach him. The throne of Solomon might awe you, but the manger of the Son of David must invite you.

JESUS AND THE PALACE.

The palaces of emperors and the halls of kings afforded the royal stranger no refuge? Alas! my brethren, seldom is there room for Christ in palaces! How could the kings of earth receive the Lord? He is the Prince of Peace, and they delight in war! He breaks their bows and cuts their spears in sunder; he burneth their war-chariots in the fire. How could kings accept the humble Savior? They love grandeur and pomp, and he is all simplicity and meakness. He is a carpenter's son, and the fisherman's companion. How can princes find room for the new-born monarch? Why, he teaches us to do to others as we would that they should do to us, and this is a thing which kings would find very hard to reconcile with the knavish tricks of politics and the grasping designs of ambition. O great ones of the earth, I am but little astonished that amid your glories, and

pleasures, and wars, and councils, ye forget the Anointed, and cast out the Lord of All. There is no room for Christ with the kings. Look throughout the kingdoms of the earth now, and, with here and there an exception, it is still true—"The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers of the earth take council together, against the Lord and against his Anointed."

In heaven we shall see here and there a monarch; but ah! how few; indeed, a child might write them. "Not many great men after the flesh, not many mighty are chosen."

State-chambers, cabinets, throne-rooms, and royal palaces, are about as little frequented by Christ as the jungles and swamps of India by the cautious traveler. He frequents cottages far more often than royal residences, for there is no room for Jesus Christ in regal halls.

JESUS AND THE LAW-MAKERS.

But there were senators, there were forums of political discussion, there were the places where the representatives of the people make the laws,—was there no room for Christ there? Alas! my brethren, none, and to this day there is very little room for Christ in parliaments How seldom is religion recognized by politicians! Of course a State-religion, if it will consent to be a poor, tame, powerless thing, a lion with its teeth all drawn, its mane all shaven off, and its claws all trimmed—yes, that may be recognized; but the true Christ, and they that follow Him and dare to obey His laws, in an evil generation, what room is there for such?

Christ and his gospel—oh! this is sectarianism, and

is scarcely worthy of the notice of contempt. Who pleads for Jesus in the senate? Is not his religion, under the name of sectarianism, the great terror of all parties? Who quotes his golden rule as a direction for prime ministers, or preaches Christ-like forgiveness as a rule for national policy?

One or two will give him a good word, but if it be put to the vote whether the Lord Jesus should be obeyed or no, it will be many a day before the *ayes* have it. Parties, policies, place-hunters, and pleasure-seekers exclude the Representative of Heaven from a place among representatives of Earth.

JESUS AND SOCIETY.

Might there not be found some room for Christ in what is called good society? Were there not in Bethlehem some people that were very respectable, who kept themselves aloof from the common multitude; persons of reputation and standing—could not they find room for Christ? Ah! dear friends, it is too much the case that there is no room for him in what is called good society. There is use for all the silly little forms by which men choose to trammel themselves; room for the vain niceties of etiquette; room for frivolous conversation; room for the adoration of the body; there is room for the setting up of this and that as the idol of the hour, but there is too little room for Christ, and it is far from fashionable to follow the Lord fully.

The advent of Christ would be the last thing which gay society would desire; the very mention of his name by the lips of love would cause a strange sensation. Should you begin to talk about the things of Christ in

many a circle, you would be tabooed at once. "I will never ask that man to my house again," so-and-so would say, "if he must bring his religion with him." Folly and finery, rank and honor, jewels and glitter, frivolity and fashion, all report, that there is no room for Jesus in their abodes.

JESUS AND COMMERCE.

But is there not room for him on the exchange? Cannot he be taken to the marts of commerce? Here are the shop-keepers of a shop-keeping nation—is there not room for Christ here? Ah! dear friends, how little of the spirit, and life, and doctrine of Christ can be found here! The trader finds it inconvenient to be too scrupulous; the merchant often discovers that if he is to make a fortune he must break his conscience. How many there are—well, I will not say they tell lies directly, but still, still, still—I had better say it plainly—they do lie indirectly with a vengeance.

Who does not know as he rides along that there must be many liars abroad? for almost every house you see is "The cheapest house in London," which can hardly be; full sure they cannot all be cheapest! What sharp practice some indulge in! What puffery and falsehood! What cunning and sleight of hand! What woes would my Master pronounce on some of you if he looked into your shop windows, or stood behind your counters. Bankruptcies, swindlings, frauds are so abundant that in hosts of cases there is no room for Jesus in the mart or the shop.

JESUS AND THE UNIVERSITY.

Then there are the schools of the philosophers, surely

they will entertain him. The wise men will find in him incarnate wisdom; he, who as a youth is to become the teacher of doctors, who will sit down and ask them questions and receive their answers, surely he will find room at once among the Grecian sages, and men of sense and wit will honor him.

"Room for him, Socrates and Plato! Stoics and Epicurians give ye way; and you, ye teachers of Israel, vacate your seats; if there is no room for this child without your going, go; we must have him in the schools of philosophy if we put you all forth."

No, dear friends, but it is not so; there is very little room for Christ in colleges and universities, very little room for him in the seats of learning. How often learning helps men to raise objections to Christ! Too often learning is the forge where the nails are made for Christ's crucifixion; too often human wit has become the artificer who has pointed the spear and made the shaft with which his heart should be pierced. We must say it, that philosophy, falsely so called (for true philosophy, if it were handled aright, must ever be Christ's friend) philosophy, falsely so called, hath done mischief to Christ, but seldom hath it served his cause.

A few with splendid talents, a few of the erudite and profound, have bowed like children at the feet of the Babe of Bethlehem, and have been honored in bowing there, but too many, conscious of their knowledge, stiff and stern in their conceit of wisdom, have said, "Who is Christ, that we should acknowledge him?" They found no room for him in the schools.

JESUS AND THE SANHEDRIM.

But there was surely one place where he could go—it was *the Sanhedrim*, where the elders sit. Or could he not be housed in the priestly chamber where the priests assemble with the Levites. Was there not room for him in the temple or the synagogue? No, he found no shelter there; it was there, his whole life long, that he found his most ferocious enemies. Not the common multitude, but the priests were the instigators of his death; the priests moved the people to say, "Not this man, but Barabbas."

The priests paid out their shekels to bribe the popular voice, and then Christ was hounded to his death. Surely there ought to have been room for him in the Church of his own people; but there was not. Too often in the priestly church, when once it becomes recognized and mounts to dignity, there is no room for Christ. I allude not now to any one denomination, but take the whole sweep of Christendom, and it is strange that when the Lord comes to his own his own receive him not. The most accursed enemies of true religion have been the men who pretended to be its advocates. It is little marvel when bishops undermine the popular faith in revelation; this is neither their first nor last offence. Who burned the martyrs, and made Smithfield a field of blood, a burning, fiery furnace, a great altar for the Most High of God? Why, those who professed to be Anointed of the Lord, whose shaven crowns had received episcopal benediction. Who put John Bunyan in prison? Who chased such men as Owen and the Puritans from their pulpits? Who harried the Covenanters upon the

mountains? Who, Sirs, but the professed messengers of heaven and priests of God? Who have hunted the baptized saints in every land, and hunt them still in many a Continental state? The priests ever; there is no room for Christ with the prophets of Baal, the servants of Babylon. The false hirelings that are not Christ's shepherds, and love not his sheep, have ever been the most ferocious enemies of our God and of his Christ. There is no room for him where his name is chanted in solemn hymns and his image lifted up amid smoke of incense. Go where he will, and there is no space for the Prince of Peace but with the humble and contrite spirits which by grace he prepares to yield him shelter.

JESUS AND THE FACTORY.

I address many who are working-men. You are employed among a great many artisans day after day; do you not find, brethren—I know you do—that there is no room for Christ in the workshop? There is room there for everything else; there is room for swearing; there is room for drunkenness; there is room for lewd conversation; there is room for politics, slanders, or infidelities; but there is no room for Christ.

Too many of our workingmen think religion would be an incumbrance, a chain, a miserable prison to them. They can frequent the theatre, or listen in a lecture hall, but the house of God is too dreary for them. I wish I were not compelled to say so, but truly in our factories, workshops, and foundries there is no room for Christ. The world is elbowing and pushing for more room, till there is scarce a corner left where the Babe of Bethlehem can be laid.

JESUS AND THE MODERN INN.

As for the inns of modern times—who would think of finding Christ there? Putting out of our catalogue those hotels and roadside houses which are needed for accommodation of travelers, what greater curse have we than our taverns and pot-houses What wider gates of hell? Who would ever resort to such places as we have, flaring with gas light, at the corners of all our streets to find Christ there? As well might we expect to find him in the bottomless pit! We should be just as likely to look for angels in hell, as to look for Christ in a gin palace! He who is separate from sinners, finds no fit society in the reeking temple of Bacchus. There is no room for Jesus in the inn.

I think I would rather rot or feed the crows, than earn my daily bread by the pence of fools, the hard earnings of the poor man, stolen from his ragged children, and his emaciated wife.

What do many publicans fatten upon but the flesh, and bones, and blood, and souls of men. He who grows rich on the fruits of vice is a beast preparing for the slaughter. Truly, there is no room for Christ among the drunkards of Ephraim. They who have anything to do with Christ should hear him say, "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate; touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters." There is no room for Christ now-a-days even in the places of public resort.

JESUS AND THE HUMAN HEART.

This brings me to my fourth head, which is the most

pertinent, and the most necessary to dwell upon for a moment. Have *you* room for Christ?

As the palace, and the forum, and the inn, have no room for Christ, and as the places of public resort have none, have *you* room for Christ? "Well," says one, "I have room for him, but I am not worthy that he should come to me." Ah! I did not ask about worthiness; have you room for him? "Oh," says one, "I have an empty void, the world can never fill!" Ah! I see you have room for him. "Oh! but the room I have in my heart is so base!" So was the manger. "But it is so despicable!" So was the manger a thing to be despised. "Ah! but my heart is so foul!" So, perhaps, the manger may have been. "Oh! but I feel it is a place not at all fit for Christ!" Nor was the manger a place fit for him, and yet there was he laid. "Oh! but I have been such a sinner; I feel as if my heart had been a den of beasts and devils!" Well, the manger had been a place where beasts had fed.

Have you room for Him? Never mind what the past has been; he can forget and forgive. It mattereth not what even the present state may be if thou mournest it. If thou hast but room for Christ he will come and be thy guest. Do not say, I pray you, "I hope *I shall have* room for him;" the time is come that he shall be born; Mary cannot wait months and years. Oh! sinner, if thou hast room for him, let him be born in thy soul to-day. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation." "To-day is the accepted time; to-day is the day of salvation."

Room for Jesus! Room for Jesus now! "Oh!" says one, "I have room for him, but will he come?"

Will he come indeed! Do you but set the door of your heart open, do but say, "Jesus, Master, all unworthy and unclean I look to thee; come, lodge within my heart," and he will come to thee, and he will cleanse the manger of thy heart, nay, will transform it into a golden throne, and there he will sit and reign for ever and for ever. Oh! I have such a free Christ to preach this morning! I would I could preach him better. I have such a precious, loving Jesus to preach, he is willing to find a home in humble hearts. What! are there no hearts here this morning that will take him in? Must my eye glance round these galleries and look at many of you who are still without him, and are there none who will say, "Come in, come in?"

Oh! it shall be a happy day for you if you shall be enabled to take him in your arms and receive him as the consolation of Israel! You may then look forward even to death with joy, and say with Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

My Master wants room! Room for him! Room for him! I, his herald, cry aloud, Room for the Savior! Room! Here is my royal Master—have you room for him? Here is the Son of God made flesh—have you room for him? Here is he who can forgive all sin—have you room for him? Here is he who can take you up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay—have you room for him? Here is he who, when he cometh in, will never go out again, but abide with you for ever to make

your heart a heaven of joy and bliss for you—have you room for him? 'Tis all I ask. Your emptiness, your nothingness, your want of feeling, your want of goodness, your want of grace—all these will be but room for him. Have you room for him? Oh! Spirit of God, lead many to say, "Yes, my heart is ready." Ah! then he will come and dwell with you.

JESUS PUBLISHED.

To begin, then, in the first place, we find that some celebrated the Savior's birth by *publishing abroad* what they had heard and seen; and truly we may say of them that they had something to rehearse in men's ears, well worth the telling. That for which prophets and kings had waited long, had at last arrived, and arrived to them. They had found out the answer to the perpetual riddle. They might have run through the streets with the ancient philosopher, crying, "Eureka! Eureka!" for their discovery was far superior to his. They had found out no solution to a mechanical problem or metaphysical dilemma, but their discovery was second to none ever made by men in real value, since it has been like the leaves of the tree of life to heal the nations, and a river of water of life to make glad the city of God.

They had seen angels; they had heard them sing a song all strange and new. They had seen more than angels—they had beheld the angel's King, the Angel of the Covenant whom we delight in. They had heard the music of heaven, and when near that manger the ear of their faith had heard the music of earth's hope, a mystic harmony which should ring all down the ages,—the grave, sweet melody of hearts attuned to praise the Lord, and

the glorious swell of the holy joy of God and man rejoicing in glad accord. They had seen God incarnate, —such a sight that he who gazeth on it must feel his tongue unloosed, unless, indeed, an unspeakable astonishment should make him dumb.

Be silent when their eye had seen such a vision! Impossible! To the first person they met outside that lowly stable door they began to tell their matchless tale, and they wearied not till nightfall, crying, "Come and worship! Come and worship Christ, the new-born King!"

As for us, beloved, have we also not something to relate which demands utterance? If we talk of Jesus, who can blame us? This, indeed, might make the tongue of him that sleeps to move,—the mystery of God incarnate for our sake, bleeding and dying that we might neither bleed nor die, descending that we might ascend, and wrapped in swaddling bands that we might be unwrapped of the grave-clothes of corruption. Here is such a story, so profitable to all hearers that he who repeats it the most often does best, and he who speaks the least hath most reason to accuse himself for sinful silence.

They had something to tell, and that something had in it the inimitable blending which is the secret sign and royal mark of Divine authorship; a peerless marrying of sublimity and simplicity; angels singing!—singing to shepherds! Heaven, bright with glory! bright at midnight! God! A Babe!! The Infinite! An Infant of a span long!! The Ancient of Days! Born of a woman!!

What more simple than the inn, the manger, a carpenter, a carpenter's wife, a child? What more sublime

than a "multitude of the heavenly host" waking the midnight with their joyous chorales, and God himself in human flesh made manifest.

A child is but an ordinary sight; but what a marvel to see that Word which was "in the beginning with God, tabernacling among us that we might behold his glory—the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth?"

Brethren, we have a tale to tell, as simple as sublime. What simpler?—"Believe and live." What more sublime?—"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself!" A system of salvation so wonderful that angelic minds cannot but adore as they meditate upon it; and yet so simple that the children in the temple may fitly hymn its virtues as they sing, "Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." What a splendid combining of the sublime and the simple have we in the great atonement offered by the incarnate Savior! Oh make known to all men this saving truth!

JESUS THE WONDERFUL.

Let me suggest to you that holy wonder at what God has done should be very natural to you. That God should consider his fallen creature, man, and instead of sweeping him away with the besom of destruction, should devise a wonderful scheme for his redemption, and that he should himself undertake to be man's Redeemer, and to pay his ransom price, is, indeed, marvelous!

Probably it is most marvelous to you in its relation to yourself, that *you* should be redeemed by blood; that God should forsake the thrones and royalties above to suffer

ignominiously below for you. If you know yourself you can never see any adequate motive or reason in your own flesh for such a deed as this.

"Why such love to me?" you will say.

If David, sitting in his house, could only say, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" what should you and I say? Had we been the most meritorious of individuals, and had unceasingly kept the Lord's commands, we could not have desired such a priceless boon as incarnation; but sinners, offenders, who revolted and went from God, further and further, what shall we say of this incarnate God dying for us, but "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us."

Let your soul lose itself in wonder, for wonder, dear friends, is in this way a very practical emotion. Holy wonder will lead you to grateful worship; being astonished at what God has done, you will pour out your soul with astonishment at the foot of the golden throne with the song, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and majesty, and power, and dominion, and might be unto him who sitteth on the throne and does these great things to me."

Filled with the wonder, it will cause you a godly watchfulness; you will be afraid to sin against such love as this. Feeling the presence of the mighty God in the gift of his dear Son, you will put off your shoes from off your feet, because the place whereon you stand is holy ground. You will be moved at the same time to a glorious hope. If Jesus has given himself to you, if he has done this marvelous thing on your behalf, you will feel that heaven itself is not too great for your expectation,

and that the rivers of pleasure at God's right hand are not too sweet or too deep for you to drink thereof.

Who can be astonished at anything when he has once been astonished at the manger and the cross? What is there wonderful left after one has seen the Savior? The nine wonders of the world! Why, you may put them all into a nutshell—machinery and modern art can excel them all; but this one wonder is not the wonder of the earth only, but of heaven and earth, and even hell itself. It is not the wonder of the olden time, but the wonder of all time and the wonder of eternity.

They who see human wonders a few times, at last cease to be astonished; the noblest pile that architect ever raised, at last fails to impress the onlooker; but not so this marvelous temple of incarnate Deity; the more we look the more we are astonished, the more we become accustomed to it, the more have we a sense of its surprising splendor of love and grace. There is more of God, let us say, to be seen in the manger and the cross, than in the sparkling stars above, the rolling deep below, the towering mountain, the teeming valleys, the abodes of life, or the abyss of death. Let us then spend some choice hours of this festive season in holy wonder, such as will produce gratitude, worship, love, and confidence.

JESUS GLORIFIED.

The last piece of holy Christmas work is to come. "The shepherds returned," we read in the twentieth verse, "Glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them." Returned to what? Returned to business, to look after

the lambs and sheep again. Then, if we desire to glorify God, we need not give up our business.

Some people get the notion into their heads that the only way in which they can live for God is by becoming ministers, missionaries, or Bible women. Alas! how many of us would be shut out from any opportunity of magnifying the Most High if this were the case. The shepherds went back to the sheep-pens, glorifying and praising God.

Beloved, it is not office, it is earnestness; it is not position, it is grace which will enable us to glorify God. God is most surely glorified in that cobbler's stall, where the godly worker, as he plies the awl, sings of the Savior's love, ay, glorified far more than in many a prebendal stall where official religiousness performs its scanty duties.

The name of Jesus is glorified by yonder carter as he drives his horse and blesses his God, or speaks to his fellow laborer by the roadside as much as by yonder divine who, throughout the country like Boanerges, is thundering out the gospel.

God is glorified by our abiding in our vocation. Take care you do not fall out of the path of duty by leaving your calling, and take care you do not dishonor your profession while in it; think not much of yourselves, but do not think too little of your callings. There is no trade which is not sanctified by the gospel. If you turn to the Bible, you will find the most menial forms of labor have been in some way or other connected with the most daring deeds of faith, or else with persons whose lives have been otherwise illustrious; keep to your calling,

brother, keep to your calling! Whatever God has made thee, when he calls thee, abide in that, unless thou art quite sure that he calls thee to something else. The shepherds glorified God though they went to their trade.

They glorified God though they were shepherds.

As we remarked, they were not men of learning. So far from having an extensive library full of books, it is probable they could not read a word, yet they glorified God.

This takes away all excuse for you good people who say, "I am no scholar; I never had any education, I never went even to a Sunday school."

Ah! but if your heart is right, you can glorify God. Never mind, Sarah, do not be cast down because you know so little; learn more if you can, but make good use of what you do know. Never mind, John; it is, indeed, a pity that you should have had to toil so early, as not to have acquired even the rudiments of knowledge; but do not think that you cannot glorify God. If you would praise God, live a holy life; you can do that by his grace, at any rate, without scholarship. If thou wouldst do good to others, be good thyself; and that is a way which is as open to the most illiterate as it is to the best taught. Be of good courage! Shepherds glorified God, and so may you. Remember, there is one thing in which they had a preference over the wise men. The wise men wanted a star to lead them; the shepherds did not. The wise men went wrong even with a star, stumbling into Jerusalem; the shepherds went straight away to Bethlehem. Simple minds sometimes find a glorified Christ where learned heads, much puzzled with their lore, miss

him. A good doctor used to say, "Lo, these simpletons have entered into the kingdom, while we learned men have been fumbling for the latch." It is often so; and so, ye simple minds, be ye comforted and glad.

JESUS THE SAVIOR.

Observe, the angel told them somewhat of his office, as well as of his birth. "Unto you is born this day a Savior." The very object for which he was born and came into this world was that he might deliver us from sin. What, then, was it that made us afraid? Were we not afraid of God because we felt that we were lost through sin? Well, then, here is joy upon joy. Here is not only the Lord come among us as a man, but made man in order to save man from that which separated him from God.

I feel as if I could burst out into a weeping for some here who have been spending their living riotously and gone far away from God, their Father, by their evil ways. I know they are afraid to come back. They think that the Lord will not receive them, that there is no mercy for such sinners as they have been. Oh, but think of it. —Jesus Christ has come to seek and to save that which was lost. He was born to save. If he does not save he was born in vain, for the object of his birth was salvation. If he shall not be a Savior, then the mission of God to earth has missed its end, for its design was that lost sinners might be saved. Lost one, lost one, if there were news that an angel had come to save thee there might be some cheer in it; but there are better tidings still. God has come; the Infinite, the Almighty, has stooped from the highest heaven that he may pick thee

up, a poor undone and worthless worm. Is there not comfort here? Does not the Incarnate Savior take away the horrible dread which hangs over men like a black pall?

Note that the angel did not forget to describe the person of this Savior—"A Savior which is Christ." There is his manhood. As man he was Anointed. "The Lord." There is his Godhead. Yes, this is the solid truth upon which we point our foot. Jesus of Nazareth is God; he who was conceived in the womb of the virgin and born in Bethlehem's manger is now, and always was, God over all, blessed for ever. There is no gospel if he be not God. It is no news to me to tell me that a great prophet is born. There have been great prophets before; but the world has never been redeemed from evil by mere testimony to the truth, and never will be. Tell me that God is born, that God himself has espoused our nature, and taken it into union with himself, then the bells of my heart ring merry peals, for now may I come to God since God has come to me.

We have not a nominal Savior, but a Savior fully equipped; one who in all points is like ourselves, for he is man, but in all points fit to help the feebleness which he has espoused, for he is the Anointed man.

See what an intimate mingling of the divine and human is found in the angel's song. They sing of him as "a Savior," and a Savior must of necessity be divine, in order to save from death and hell; and yet the title is drawn from his dealings with humanity. Then they sing of him as "Christ," and that must be human, for

only man can be Anointed, yet that unction comes from the Godhead.

Sound forth the jubilee trumpets for this marvelously Anointed One, and rejoice in him who is your priest to cleanse you, your prophet to instruct you, and your king to deliver you. The angels sang of him as Lord, and yet as born; so here again the godlike in dominion is joined with the human in birth. How well did the words and the sense agree.

The angel further went on to give these shepherds cause for joy by telling them that while their Savior was born to be the Lord, yet he was so born in lowliness that they would find him a babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Is there cause of joy there? I say, ay, indeed there is, for it is the terror of the Godhead which keeps the sinner oftentimes away from reconciliation; but see how the Godhead has graciously concealed itself in a babe, a little babe,—a babe that needed to be wrapped in swaddling clothes like any other new-born child. Who feareth to approach him? Who ever heard of trembling in the presence of a babe? Yet is the Godhead there. My soul, when thou canst not for very amazement stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire, when the divine glory is like a consuming fire to thy spirit, and the sacred majesty of heaven is altogether overpowering to thee, then come thou to this babe, and say, "Yet God is here, and here can I meet him in the person of his dear Son, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Oh, what bliss there is in incarnation if we remember that herein God's omnipotence cometh down to man's

feebleness, and infinite majesty stoops to man's infirmity.

Now mark, the shepherds were not to find this babe wrapped in Tyrian purple nor swathed in choicest fabrics fetched from afar.

> "No crown bedecks his forehead fair,
> No pearl, nor gem, nor silk is there."

Nor would they discover him in the marble halls of princes, nor guarded by prætorian legionaries, nor lackied by vassal sovereigns, but they would find him the babe of a peasant woman, of princely lineage, it is true, but of a family whose stock was dry and forgotten in Israel. The child was reputed to be the son of a carpenter. If you looked on the humble father and mother, and at the poor bed they had made up, where aforetime oxen had come to feed, you would say, "This is condescension indeed."

O ye poor, be glad, for Jesus is born in poverty, and cradled in a manger. O ye sons of toil rejoice, for the Savior is born of a lowly virgin, and a carpenter is his foster father. O ye people, oftentimes despised and downtrodden, the Prince of the Democracy is born, one chosen out of the people is exalted to the throne. O ye who call yourselves the aristocracy, behold the Prince of the kings of the earth, whose lineage is divine, and yet there is no room for him in the inn.

Behold, O men, the Son of God, who is bone of your bone, intimate with all your griefs, who, in his after life, hungered as ye hunger, was weary as ye are weary, and wore humble garments like your own; yea, suffered worse poverty than you, for he was without a place whereon to lay his head. Let the heavens and the earth

be glad, since God hath so fully, so truly come down to man.

JESUS THE REPRESENTATIVE MAN.

You will observe, dear friends, however, that the pith of what the angel said lay in this. "Unto you." You will never get true comfort from the incarnate Savior till you perceive your personal interest in him. Christ as man was a representative man. There never were but two thoroughly representative men; the first is Adam; Adam obedient, the whole race stands, Adam disobedient the whole race falls. "In Adam all die."

Now, the man Jesus is the second great representative man. He does not represent the whole human race, he represents as many as his Father gave him; he represents a chosen company. Now, whatever Christ did, if you belong to those who are in him, he did for you. So that Christ circumcised or Christ crucified, Christ dead or Christ living, Christ buried or Christ risen, you are a partaker of all that he did and all that he is, for you are reckoned as one with him.

See, then, the joy and comfort of the incarnation of Christ. Does Jesus, as man, take manhood up to heaven? He has taken me up there, Father Adam fell, and I fell for I was in him. The Lord Jesus Christ rises, and I rise if I am in him.

See, beloved, when Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross all his elect were nailed there, and they suffered and died in him. When he was put into the grave the whole of his people lay slumbering there in him, for they were in the loins of Jesus as Levi was in the loins of Abraham; and when he rose they rose and received the

foretaste of their future resurrection, because he lives they shall live also; and now that he has gone up on high to claim the throne, he has claimed the throne for every soul that is in him.

Oh, this is joy indeed! Then how can I be afraid of God, for this day, by faith, I, a poor undeserving sinner, having put my trust in Jesus, am bold to say that I sit upon the throne of God. Think not that we have said too much, for in the person of Christ every believer is raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Because, as Jesus is there, representatively, we are each one of us there in him.

"He shall be great."—Luke i. 32.

Strictly speaking, I suppose these words refer to the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is as to his humanity that Christ was born of Mary. The context runs thus—"Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; And he shall reign over the house of Jaeob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

The angel of the Lord thus spake concerning the manhood of "that holy thing" that should be born of the favored virgin by the overshadowing of the power of the Highest. As to his divinity, we must speak concerning him in another style than this: but, as a man, he was born of the virgin, and it was said to her before his birth, "He shall be great."

The man Christ Jesus stooped very low. In his first

estate he was not great; he was very little when he hung upon his mother's breast. In his after estate he was not great; but despised, rejected, and crucified. Indeed, he was so poor that he had not where to lay his head; and he was so cast out by the tongues of men that they called him a "fellow," mentioned him among drunken men and wine-bibbers, and even accused him of having a devil, and being mad. In the esteem of the great ones of the earth he was an ignorant Galilean of whom they said, "We know not whence he is."

His life binds up more fitly with the lowly annals of the poor than with the court-circular of whatever stood for that in Cæsar's day. In his own time his enemies could not find a word base enough to express their contempt of him. He was brought very low in his trial, condemnation and suffering. Who thought him great when he was covered with bloody sweat, or when he was sold at the price of a slave, or when a guard came out against him with swords, and with lanterns, and with torches, as if he had been a thief? Who thought him great when they bound him and led him to the judgment-seat as a malefactor? or when the abjects smote him, blindfolded him, and spat in his face? or when he was scourged, led through the streets bearing his cross, and afterward hung up between two thieves to die?

Truly he was brought very low, and a sword pierced through his mother's heart as she saw the sufferings of her holy Son. When she knew that he was dead, and buried in a borrowed tomb, she must have painfully pondered in her heart the words from heaven concerning him, and thought within herself, "The angel said he

should be great, but who is made so vile as he? He said that he should be called the 'Son of the Highest,' but, lo! he is brought into the dust of death; and men seal his sepulchre, and cast out his name as evil."

But our Lord Jesus is also man, and this makes the singularity of his person, that he should be perfectly and purely God, and as truly and really man. He is not humanity deified; he is not Godhead humanized. I have admitted latitude of expression; but there is, in fact, no confusion of the substance. He is God. He is man. He is all that God is, and all that man is as God created him. He is as truly God as if he were not man, and yet as completely and perfectly man as if he were not God. Think of this wondrous combination! a perfect manhood without spot or stain of original or actual sin, and then the glorious Godhead combined with it!

Said I not truly that Jesus stands alone? He is not greatest of the great; but great where all else are little. He is not something among all; but all where all else are nothing.

Who shall be compared with him? He counts it not robbery to be equal with God, and among men he is the Firstborn of every creature; among the risen ones he is the Firstborn by his resurrection from the dead; among the glorified he is the source and object of glory.

I cannot compass his nature: who shall declare his generation? He is one with us, and yet inconceivably beyond us. Our nature is limited, sinful, fallen; but his nature is unbounded, holy, divine. When Jehovah looks on us we ask, "What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" But

"when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." Shall it not truly be said as to his nature, "He is great"?

GOD INCARNATE.

The incarnation of the Son of God was one of the greatest events in the history of the universe. Its actual occurrence was not, however, known to all mankind, but was specially revealed to the shepherds of Bethlehem and to certain wise men of the east.

To shepherds—the illiterate, men little versed in human learning—the angels in choral song made known the birth of the Savior, Christ the Lord, and they hastened to Bethlehem to see the great sight; while the Scribes, the writers of the law and the expounders of it, knew nothing of the long-promised birth of the Messias. No angelic bands entered the assembly of the Sanhedrim and proclaimed that the Christ was born; and when the chief priests and Pharisees were met together, though they gathered around copies of the law to consider where Christ should be born, yet it was not known to them that he was actually come, nor do they seem to have taken more than a passing interest in the matter, though they might have known that then was the time spoken of by the prophets when the great Messiah should come. How mysterious are the dispensations of grace; the base things are chosen and the eminent are passed by! The advent of the Redeemer is revealed to the shepherds who kept their flocks of sheep by night, but not to the shepherds whose benighted sheep were left to stray. Admire therein the sovereignty of God.

The glad tidings were made known also to wise men,

magi, students of the stars and of old prophetic books from the far-off east It would not be possible to tell how far off their native country lay ; it may have been so distant that the journey occupied nearly the whole of the two years of which they spake concerning the appearance of the star. Traveling was slow in those days, surrounded with difficulties and many dangers. They may have come from Persia, or India, or Tartary, or even from the mysterious land of Sinim, now known to us as China. If so, strange and uncouth must have been the speech of those who worshipped around the young child at Bethlehem, yet needed he no interpreter to understand and accept their adoration. Why was the birth of the King of the Jews made known to these foreigners, and not to those nearer home? Why did the Lord select those who were so many hundreds of miles away, while the children of the kingdom, in whose very midst the Savior was brought forth, were yet strangely ignorant of his presence?

See here again another instance of the sovereignty of God. Both in shepherds and in Eastern magi gathering around the young Child, I see God dispensing his favors as he wills ; and, as I see it, I exclaim, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father ; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Herein we see again another instance of God's sovereign will ; for, as of old, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elias, the prophet, but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto the woman of Sarepta;

so many there were who were called wise men among the Jews, but unto none of them did the star appear; but it shone on Gentile eyes, and led a chosen company from the ends of the earth to bow at Emmanuel's feet.

JESUS SOUGHT.

Notice, however, that the wise men were not content with admitting their ignorance, but in their case there was information entreated.

I cannot tell where they began to ask. They thought it likeliest that Jesus would be known at the metropolitan city. Was he not the King of the Jews? where was he so certain to be known as at the capital? They went, therefore to Jerusalem.

Perhaps they asked the guards at the gate, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" and the guards laughed them to scorn, and replied, "We know no king but Herod."

Then they met a loiterer in the streets, and to him they said, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" and he answered, "What care I for such crazy questions? I am looking for a drinking companion,"

They asked a trader, but he sneered, and said, "Never mind kings, what will you buy, or what have you to sell?"

"Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" said they to a Sadducee, and he replied, "Be not such fools as to talk in that fashion, or, if you do, pray call on my religious friend, the Pharisee."

They passed a woman in the streets, and asked, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" but she said, "My child is sick at home, I have enough to do to

think of my poor babe ; I care not who is born, or who may die beside."

When they went to the very highest quarters, they obtained but poor information, but they were not content till they had learned all that could be known. They did not know at first where the new-born King was, but they used every means to find him, and asked information on all hands. It is delightful to see the holy eagerness of a soul which God has quickened ; it cries, "I must be saved; I know something of the way of salvation, I am grateful for that, but I do not know all I want to know, and I cannot rest satisfied till I do. If beneath the canopy of heaven a Savior is to be found, I will have him ; if that book can teach me how to be saved, I will turn its pages day and night ; if any book within my reach may help me, I will spare no midnight oil if I may but in the reading thereof find out Christ my Saviour. If there be one whose preaching has been blessed to the souls of others, I will hang on his lips, if perhaps the word may be blessed to me, for Christ I must have ; it is not I may or I may not have him, but I *must* have him; my hunger is great for this bread of heaven, my thirst insatiable for this water of life ; tell me, Christians, tell me, wise men, tell me, good men, tell me any of you who can tell, where is he that is born King of the Jews ? for Christ I must have, and I long to have him now."

EMMANUEL.

Those words, "being interpreted," salute my ear with much sweetness. Why should the word "Emmanuel" in the Hebrew, be interpreted at all ? Was it not to

show that it has reference to us Gentiles, and therefore it must needs be interpreted into one of the chief languages of the then existing Gentile world, namely, the Greek. This "being interpreted" at Christ's birth, and the three languages employed in the inscription upon the cross at his death, show that he is not the Savior of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.

As I walked along the quay at Marseilles, and marked the ships of all nations gathered in the port, I was very much interested by the inscriptions upon the shops and stores. The announcements of refreshments or of goods to be had within were not only printed in the French language, but in English, in Italian, in German, in Greek, sometimes in Russian and Swedish.

Upon the shops of the sail-makers, the boat-builders, the ironmongers, or the dealers in ship stores, you read a polyglot announcement, setting forth the information to men of many lands. This was a clear indication that persons of all nation were invited to come and purchase, that they were expected to come, and that provision was made for their peculiar wants. "Being interpreted' must mean that different nations are addresed.

We have the text put first in the Hebrew "Emmanuel," and afterwards it is translated into the Gentile tongue, "God with us;" "being interpreted," that we may know that we are invited, that we are welcome, that God has seen our necessities and provided for us, and that now we may really come, even we who were sinners of the Gentiles, and far off from God. Let us preserve with reverent love both forms of the precious name and wait the happy day when our Hebrew brethren shall

unite their "Emmanuel" with our "God with us."

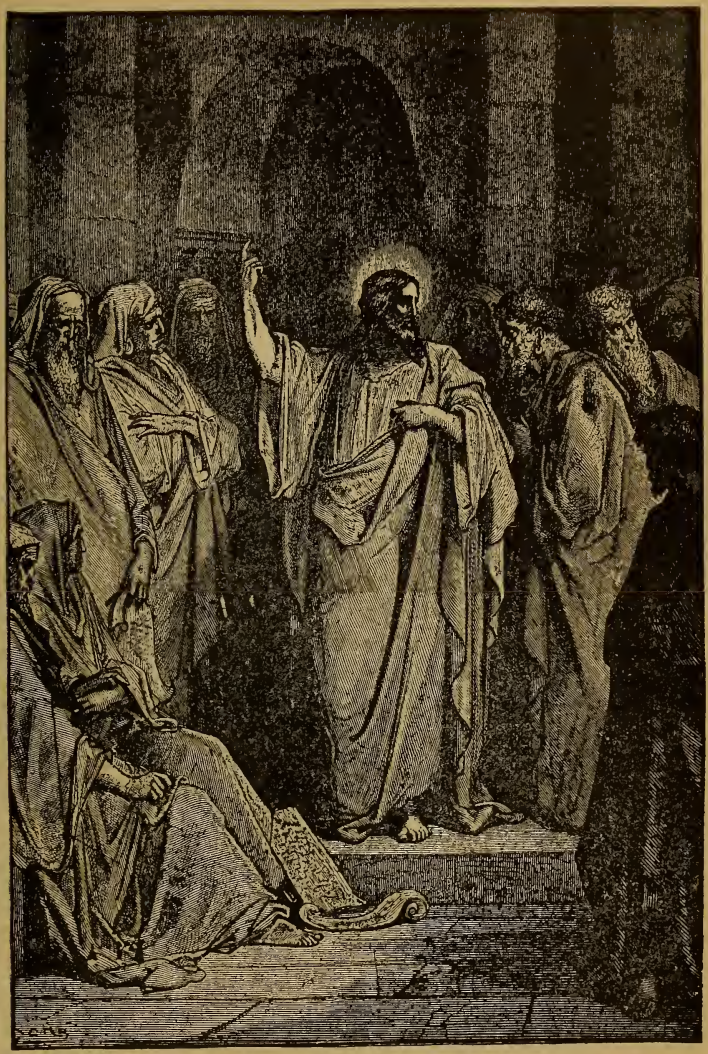
Our text speaks of a *name* of our Lord Jesus. It is said, "They shall call his name Emmanuel."

In these days we call children by names which have no particular meaning. They are the names, perhaps, of father or mother, or some respected relative, but there is no special meaning, as a general rule, in our children's names. It was not so in the olden times. Then names meant something. Scriptural names, as a general rule, contain teaching, and especially is this the case in every name ascribed to the Lord Jesus.

With him names indicate things. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," because he really is all these.

His name is called Jesus, but not without a reason. By any other name Jesus would not be so sweet, because no other name could fairly describe his great work of saving his people from their sins. When he is said to be called this or that, it means that he really is so. I am not aware that anywhere in the New Testament our Lord is afterward called Emmanuel. I do not find his apostles, or any of his disciples, calling him by that name literally; but we find them all doing so in effect, for they speak of him as "God manifest in the flesh," and they say, "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

They do not use the actual word, but they again interpret and give us free and instructive renderings, while they proclaim the sense of the august title and inform us



CHRIST IN THE SYNAGOGUE.
From the Painting by Gustave Dore.

in divers ways what is meant by God being with us in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a glorious fact, of the highest importance, that since Christ was born into the world God is with us.

You may divide the text, if you please, into two portions:—"GOD," and then "GOD WITH US." We must dwell with equal emphasis upon each word. Never let us for a moment hesitate as to the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ, for his Deity is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. It may be we shall never understand fully how God and man could unite in one person, for who can by searehing find out God.

These great mysteries of Godliness, these "deep things of God," are beyond our measurement: our little skiff might be lost if we ventured so far out upon this vast, this infinite ocean, as to lose sight of the shore of plainly revealed truth.

But let it remain as a matter of faith that Jesus Christ, even he who lay in Bethlehem's manger, and was carried in a womnn's arms, and lived a suffering life and died on a malefactor's cross, was, nevertheless, "God over all, blessed for ever," "upholding all things by the word of his power."

He was not an angel—that the apostle has abundantly dispvoved in the first and second chapters of the epistle to the Hebrews: he could not have been an angel, for honors were ascribed to him which were never bestowed on angels.

He was no subordinate deity or being elevated to the Godhead, as some have absurdly said—all these things are dreams and falsehoods; he was as surely God as God

can be, one with the Father and the ever-blessed Spirit. If it were not so, not only would the great strength of our hope be gone, but as to this text the sweetness had evaporated altogether. The very essence and glory of the incarnation is that he was God who was veiled in human flesh: if it was any other being who thus came to us in human flesh, I see nothing very remarkable in it, nothing comforting, certainly.

That an angel should become a man is a matter of no great consequence to me: that some other superior being should assume the nature of man brings no joy to my heart, and opens no well of consolation to me. But "God with us" is exquisite delight. "GOD with us": all that "God" means, the Deity, the infinite Jehovah with us: this, this is worthy of the burst of midnight song, when angels startled the shepherds with their carols, singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men."

This was worthy of the foresight of seers and prophets, worthy of a new star in the heavens, worthy of the care which inspiration has manifested to preserve the record. This, too, was worthy of the martyr deaths of apostles and confessors who counted not their lives dear unto them for the sake of the incarnate God; and this, my brethren, is worthy at this day of your most earnest endeavors to spread the glad tidings worthy af a holy life to illustrate its blessed influences, and worthy of a joyful death to prove its consoling power.

Here is the first truth of our holy faith—"Without controversy great is the mystery ot godliness, God was manifest in the flesh." He who was born at Bethlehem

is God, and "God with us." God—there lies the majesty; "God with us," there lies the mercy. *God*—therein is glory; "God *with us*," therein is grace.

God alone might well strike us with terror; but "God with us" inspires us with hope and confidence. Take my text as a whole, and carry it in your bosoms as a bundle of sweet spices to perfume your hearts with peace and joy. May the Holy Spirit open to you the truth, and the truth to you.

Christ Jesus was the man of men, the second Adam, the model representative man. Think not of him as a deified man any more than you would dare to regard him as a humanized God, or demigod.

Do not confound the natures nor divide the person; he is but one person, yet very man as he is also very God. Think of this truth then, and say, "He who sits on the throne is such as I am, sin alone excepted."

No, 'tis too much for speech, I will not speak of it; it is a theme which masters me, and I fear to utter rash expressions. Turn the truth over and over, and see if it be not sweeter than honey and the honey-comb.

> Oh joy! there sitteth in our flesh,
> Upon a throne of light,
> One of a human mother born,
> In perfect Godhead bright."

Being with us in our nature, God was with us in all our life's pilgrimage. Scarcely can you find a halting place in the march of life at which Jesus has not paused, or a weary league which he has not traversed. From the gate of entrance even to the door which closes life's way, the foot prints of Jesus may be traced.

Were you in the cradle? He was there. Were you a child under parental authority? Christ was also a boy in the home at Nazareth. Have you entered upon life's battle? Your Lord and Master did the same; and though he lived not to old age, yet through incessant toil and suffering he bore the marred visage which attends a battered old age.

Are you alone? So was he, in the wilderness, and on the mountain's side, and in the garden's gloom. Do you mix in public society? So did he labor in the thickest press. Where can you find yourself, on the hill top, or in the valley, on the land or on the sea, in daylight or in darkness,—where, I say, can you be without discovering that Jesus has been there before you?

What the world has said of her great poet we might with far more truth say of our Redeemer—

> "A man so various that he seemed to be
> Not one, but all mankind's epitome."

One harmonious man he was, and yet all saintly lives seem to be condensed in his. Two believers may be very unlike each other, and yet both will find that Christ's life has in it points of likeness to their own. One shall be rich and another poor, one actively laborious and another patiently suffering, and yet each man in studying the history of the Savior shall be able to say—his pathway ran hard by my own. He was made in all points like unto his brethren. How charming is the fact that our Lord is "God with us," not here and there, and now and then, but evermore.

Especially does this come out with sweetness in his being "God with us" in our sorrows. There is no pang

that rends the heart, I might almost say not one which disturbs the body, but what Jesus Christ has been with us in it all.

Feel you the sorrows of poverty? He "had not where to lay his head." Do you endure the griefs of bereavement? Jesus "wept" at the tomb of Lazarus. Have you been slandered for righteousness' sake, and has it vexed your spirit? He said, "Reproach hath broken mine heart."

Have you been betrayed? Do not forget that he, too, had his familiar friend, who sold him for the price of a slave. On what stormy seas have you been tossed which have not also roared around his boat? Never glen of adversity so dark, so deep, apparently so pathless, but what in stooping down you may discover the foot-prints of the Crucified One. In the fires and in the rivers, in the cold night and under the burning sun, he cries, "I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am both thy companion and thy God."

Mysteriously true is it that when you and I shall come to the last, the closing scene, we shall find that Emmanuel has been there. He felt the pangs and throes of death, he endured the bloody sweat of agony and the parching thirst of fever. He knew the separation of the tortured spirit from the poor, fainting flesh, and cried, as we shall, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Ay, and the grave he knew, for there he slept, and left the sepulchre perfumed and furnished to be a couch of rest, and not a charnel-house of corruption.

That new tomb in the garden makes him God with us till the resurrection shall call us from our beds of clay

to find him God with us in newness of life. We shall be raised up in his likeness, and the first sight our opening eyes shall see shall be the incarnate God.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though after my skin worms devour this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

"God with us." I, in my flesh, shall see him as the man, the God. And so to all eternity he will maintain the most intimate association with us. As long as ages roll he shall be "God with us." Has he not said, "Because I live ye shall live also"? Both his human and divine life will last on forever, and so shall our life endure. He shall dwell among us and lead us to living fountains of water, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord.

And now, my brethren, to you the last word is, let us be with God, since God is with us. I give you, for a watchword through the year to come, "Emmanuel, God with us."

You, the saints redeemed by blood, have a right to all this in its fullest sense, drink into it and be filled with courage. Do not say, "We can do nothing." Who are ye that can do nothing? God is with you. Do not say, "The church is feeble and fallen upon evil times," —nay, "God is with us."

We need the courage of those ancient soldiers who were wont to regard difficulties only as whetstones upon which to sharpen their swords.

I like Alexander's talk—when they said there were so many thousands, so many millions, perhaps, of Persians. "Very well," said he, "it is good reaping where the

corn is thick. One butcher is not afraid of a thousand sheep."

I like even the talk of the old Gascon, who said when they asked him, "Can you and your troops get into that fortress? it is impregnable." "Can the sun enter it?" said he. "Yes." "Well, where the sun can go we can enter."

Whatever is possible, or whatever is impossible, Christians can do at God's command, for God is with us. Do you not see that the word, "God with us," puts impossibility out of all existence? Hearts that never could else be broken will be broken if God be with us. Errors which never else could be confuted can be overthrown by "God with us." Things impossible with men are possible with God. John Wesley died with that upon his tongue, and let us live with it upon our hearts.—"The best of all is, 'God with us.' Blessed Son of God, we thank thee that thou hast brought us that word."

THE GRANDEUR OF HIS OFFICES.

He is great also in the grandeur of his offices. Remember that he has for our sakes undertaken to be our Redeemer. You see your bondage, brethren. You know it, for some of you have worn the fetters till they have entered into your soul: from such slavery he came to redeem us. Behold his Zion in ruins, heaps on heaps, smoking, consumed! He comes to rebuild and to restore. This is his office—to build the old wastes, and to restore the temple of the living God, which had been cast down by the foe. To accomplish this he came to be our

Priest, our Prophet, and our King; in each office glorious beyond compare.

He came to be our Savior, our Sacrifice, our Substitute, our Surety, our Head, our Friend, our Lord, our Life, our All. Pile up the offices, and remember that each one is worthy of a God. Mention them as you may, and truly you shall never remember them all; for he, the express image of his Father's glory, has undertaken every kind of office, that he might perfectly redeem his people, and make them to be his own forever. In each office he has gained the summit of glory, and therein he is and shall be great.

Have you ever stood in Westminster Abbey when some great warrior was being buried, and when the herald pronounced his various titles? He has been greatly honored of his queen, and of the nation, for which he has fought so valiantly, and he is prince of this, and duke of that, and count of the other, and earl of something else: and the titles are many and brilliant.

What a parade it is! "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!" What boots it to the senseless clay that it is buried with pomp of heraldry?

But I stood at the tomb of Christ, and I say of his offices that they are superlatively grand; and, moreover, that they are not buried, neither is he among the dead. He lives and bears his honors still in the fullness of their splendor. He is all to his people still; every office he still carries on, and will carry on till he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and God shall be all in all.

Oh, the splendor of this Christ of God in the mighty

offices which he sustains! He is the Standard-bearer among ten thousand. Who is like unto him in all eternity? "The government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

Let our hearts give him our adoring praise to-night, for he is great in the glorious offices which God has heaped upon him.

His nature and his offices would alone furnish us with a lengthened theme; but oh! my brethren, the Lord Jesus is great in the splendor of his achievements. He does not wear an office whose duty is neglected; but his name is faithful and true. He is no holder of a sinecure; he claims to have finished the work which his Father gave him to do. He has undertaken great things, and, glory be to his name, he has achieved them. His people's sins were laid upon him, and he bore them up to the cross, and on the cross he made an end of them, so that they will never be mentioned against them any more for ever.

Then he went down into the grave, and slept there for a little season; but he tore away the bars of the sepulchre and left death dead at his feet, bringing life and immortality to light by his resurrection. This was his high calling, and he has fulfilled it. His victory is complete, the defeat of the foe is perfect.

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Springing upward from the tomb when the appointed

days were come, he opened heaven's gates to all believers, according to the word,—"The breaker is come up before them, and the king shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them."

As he opened the gates, he led captivity captive; and receiving gifts for men, he cast down a royal largess among the poorest of his people that they might be enriched thereby. This was his object, and the design has been carried out without flaw or failure.

Within the vail he went, our Representative, to take possession of our crowns and thrones, which he holds for us to this day by the tenure of his own cross.

Having purchased the inheritance, and paid off the heavy mortgage that lay upon it, he has taken possession of the Canaan wherein our souls shall dwell at the end of the days when we shall stand in our lot.

Is it not proven that he is great? Conquerors are great, and he is the greatest of them. Deliverers are great, and he is the greatest of them. Liberators are great, and he is the greatest of them. Saviors are great, and he is the greatest of them. They that multiply the joys of men are truly great, and what shall I say of him who has bestowed everlasting joy upon his people, and entailed it upon them by a covenant of salt for ever and ever? Well didst thou say, O Gabriel, "He shall be great," for great indeed he is!

THE NUMBER OF THE SAVED.

My theme will never be exhausted, though I may be. Let me not delay to add that our Lord Jesus Christ is great in the number of his saved ones. I do not believe

in a little Christ, or a little heaven, or a little company before the throne, or a few that shall be saved.

Hear you this, for I would fain reply to a lie that is often stated, and is the last resort of those who assail the doctrines of grace. They say that we believe that God has left the great mass of his creatures to perish, and has arbitrarily chosen an elect few.

We have never thought such a thing. We believe that the Lord has an elect many; and it is our joy and delight to think of them as a number that no man can number.

"Oh," they say, "you think that the few who go to your little Bethel or Salem are the elect of God."

That, sirs, is what you invent for your own purposes, but *we* have never said anything of this sort. We rejoice to believe that as many as the stars of heaven shall the redeemed of Christ be—that as many as the sands that are upon the sea-shore, even an innnmerable company, are those for whom Christ has shed his precious blood that he might effectually redeem them.

As I look up to the heaven of the sanctified, my mind's eye does not see a few dozen saints met together in select circles of exclusiveness; but my eyes are dazzled with the countless lights which shine each one from the lustrous brows of the redeemed; lustrous, I say, for each glorified one wears upon his forehead the name of the Most Hight.

My heart is glad to turn away from the multitude that throng the broad way, and to see a greater multitude that tbrong the heavenly fields, and, day without night, celebrate redemption by the blood of the Lamb. Have

they not washed their robes, and made them white in His blood? In all things our Lord will have the pre-eminence, and this shall be the case in the number of His followers: He shall therein vanquish His great enemy. His redeemed shall fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows. Countless as the drops of morning dew shall His people be in the day of His power. He shall be great in the host of His adherents in glory.

Multitudes upon earth are even now pursuing their road to heaven, and greater hosts are yet to follow them. A day shall be when the people of God shall be increased exceedingly, above anything that we see at this present; they shall spring up as the grass and as willows by the water-courses, as if every stone that heard the ripple of the brook had been turned iuto a man. The seed of the Lord Jesus Christ shall multiply till arithmetic shall be utterly baffled, and numeration shall fail.

He is great—a great Savior of a great mass of great sinners, who shall by His redeeming arm be brought safely, without fail, to His right hand in the endless glory. As the tribes of the natural Israel increased exceedingly, so also shall the spiritual Israel. The Lord shall multiply His Zion with men as with a flock, and thus shall the King of Israel be great.

JESUS AND HEAVEN.

And now, dear friends, you and I, being greatly pardoned through the great sacrifice, are journeying through the wilderness toward Canaan, and we have great wants and many, pressing upon us every day. We are poverty itself, and only All-sufficiency can supply us; but that is

found in Jesus. We need great abundance of food: the heavenly bread lies around about the camp, and each may fill his omer. We require rivers of living water: the smitten rock yields us a ceaseless flood; the out-flow never ceases. We have great demands, but Christ has great supplies.

Between here and Heaven we shall have, perhaps, greater wants than we have yet known; but, all along, every halting-place is ready, provender is laid up, good cheer is stored, nothing has been overlooked. The commissariat of the Eternal is absolutely perfect.

Do you feel sometimes so thirsty for grace that, like Behemorh, you could drink up Jordan at a draught? more than that river could hold is given you.

Drink abundantly, for Christ has prepared you a bottomless sea of grace to fill you with all the fullness of God. Stint not yourselves, and doubt not your Savior: wherefore should you limit the Holy One of Israel? Be great in your experience of His All-sufficiency, and great in your praise of His bounty, and then in Heaven you shall pour at His feet great treasures of gratitude for ever and ever.

OPPORTUNE.

This great transaction was accomplished at the right time: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman."

The reservoir of time had to be filled by the inflowing of age after age, and when it was full to the brim the Son of God appeared.

Why the world should have remained in darkness for four thousand years, why it should have taken that length

of time for the church to attain her full age, we cannot tell; but this we are told, that Jesus was sent forth when the fulness of time was come. Our Lord did not come before His time nor behind His time: He was punctual to His hour, and cried to the moment: "Lo, I come."

We may not curiously pry into the reasons why Christ came when He did; but we may reverently muse thereon.

The birth of Jesus is the grandest light of history, the sun in the heavens of all time. It is the polar-star of human destiny, the hinge of chronology, the meeting-place of the waters of the past and the future. Why happened it just at that moment? Assuredly it was so predicted. There were prophecies many which pointed exactly to that hour.

I will not detain you just now with them; but those of you who are familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures well know that, as with so many fingers, they pointed to the time when the Shiloh should come, and the great sacrifice should be offered.

He came at the hour which God had determined. The infinite Lord appoints the hour of every event; all times are in His hand. There are no loose threads in the providence of God, no stitches are dropped, no events are left to chance. The great clock of the universe keeps good time, and the whole machinery of providence moves with unerring punctuality. It was to be expected that the greatest of all events should be most accurately and wisely timed, and so it was.

God willed it to be when and where it was, and that will is to us the ultimate reason.

JESUS APPROACHABLE.

The most depraved and despised classes of society formed an inner ring of hearers around our Lord. I gather from this that he was a most approachable person, that he was not of repulsive manners, but that he courted human confidence and was willing that men should commune with him.

Upon that one thought I shall enlarge, this evening, and may the Holy Spirit make it a loadstone to draw many hearts to Jesus. Eastern monarchs affected great seclusion, and were wont to surround themselves with impassable barriers of state. It was very difficult for even their most loyal subjects to approach them.

You remember the case of Esther, who, though the monarch was her husband, yet went with her life in her hand when she ventured to present herself before the king, Ahasnerus, for there was a commandment that none should come unto the king except they were called, at peril of their lives.

It is not so with the King of kings. His court is far more splendid; his person is far more worshipful; but you may draw near to him at all times without let or hindrance. He has set no men-at-arms around his palace gate. The door of his house of mercy is set wide open. Over the lintel of his palace gate is written, "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."

Even in our own days great men are not readily to be come at. There are so many back stairs to be climbed before you can reach the official who might have helped you, so many subalterns to be parleyed with, and

servants to be passed by, that there is no coming at your object.

The good men may be affable enough themselves, but they remind us of the old Russian fable of the hospitable householder in a village, who was willing enough to help all the poor who came to his door, but he kept so many big dogs loose in his yard that nobody was able to get up to the door, and therefore his personal affability was of no service to the wanderers.

It is not so with our Master. Though he is greater than the greatest, and higher than the highest, he has been pleased to put out of the way everything which might keep the sinner from entering into his halls of gracious entertainment. From his lips we hear no threatenings against intrusion, but hundreds of invitations to the nearest and dearest intimacy. Jesus is to be approached, not now and then, but at all times, and not by some favored few, but by all in whose hearts His Holy Spririt has enkindled the desire to enter into his secret presence.

The philosophical teachers of our Lord's day affected very great seclusion. They considered their teachings to be so profound and electic that they were not to be uttered in the hearing of the common multitude. "Far hence, ye profane," was their scornful motto. Like Simon Stylites, they stood upon a lofty pillar of their fancied self-conceit, and dropped down now and then a stray thought upon the vulgar herd beneath, but they did not condescend to talk familiarly with them, considering it to be a dishonor to their philosophy to communicate it to the multitude.



THE GOOD SHEPHERD.—From the Painting by Plockhurst.

One of the greatest philosophers wrote over his door, "Let no one who is ignorant of geometry enter here;" but our Lord, compared with whom all the wise men are but fools, who is, in fact, the wisdom of God, never drove away a sinner because of his ignorance, never refused a seeker because he was not yet initiated, and had not taken the previous steps in the ladder of learning, and never permitted any thirsty spirit to be chased away from the crystal spring of truth divine. His every word was a diamond, and his lips dropped pearls, but he was never more at home than when speaking to the common herd, and teaching them concerning the kingdom of God.

You may thus contrast and compare our Lord's gentle manners with those of kings, and nobles, and sages, but you will find none to equal him in condescending tenderness. To this attractive quality of our Lord, I intend, this evening, as God shall help me, to ask your earnest attention. First, let us prove it; secondly, illustrate it; and, thirdly, enforce or improve it.

First, let us prove the approachableness of Christ, though it really needs no proof. for it is a fact which lies upon the surface of his life.

1. You may see it conspicuously in his offices. Those offices are too many for us to take them all to-night. We will just cull a handful; say three. Our Lord Jesus is said to be the Mediator between God and man.

Now, observe, that the office of mediator implies at once that he should be approachable. A daysman, as Job says, is one who can put his hand upon both; but if Jesus will not familiarly put his hand on man, certainly

he is no daysman between God and man. A mediator is not a mediator of one—he must be akin to both the parties between whom he mediates. If Jesus Christ shall be a perfect mediator between God and man, he must be able to come to God so near that God shall call him his fellow, and then he must approach to man so closely that he shall not be ashamed to call him brother. This is precisely the case with our Lord. Do not think of this, you who are afraid of Jesus. He is a mediator, and as a mediator you may come to him.

Jacob's ladder reached from earth to heaven, but if you had cut away half-a-dozen of the bottom rounds, what would have been the good of it? Who could ascend by it into the hill of the Lord? Jesus Christ is the great conjunction between earth and heaven, but if he will not touch the poor mortal man who comes to him, why then, of what service is he to the sons of men?

You do need a mediator between your soul and God; you must not think of coming to God without a mediator; but you do not need a mediator between yourselves and Christ. There is a preparation for coming to God—you must not come to God without a perfect righteousness; but you may come to Jesus without any preparation, and without any righteousness, because as mediator he has in himself all the righteousness and fitness that you require, and is ready to bestow them upon you. You may come bodily to him even now; he waits to reconcile you unto God by his blood.

Another of his offices is that of priest. That word "priest" has come to smell very badly nowadays; but, for all that, it is a very sweet word as we find it in Holy

Scripture. The word "priest" does not mean a gaudily-dressed pretender, who stands apart from other worshippers within the gate, two steps higher than the rest of the people, who professes to have power to dispense pardon for human sin, and I know not what beside. The true priest was truly the brother of all the people. There was no man in all the camp so brotherly as Aaron. So much were Aaron and the priests who succeeded him the first points of contact with men, on God's behalf, that when a leper had become too unclean for anybody else to draw near to him, the last man who touched him was the priest. The house might be leprous, but the priest went into it, and the man might be leprous, but he talked with him, and examined him, the last of Israel's tribes who might be familiar with the wretched outcast; and if afterwards that deceased man was cured, the first person who touched him must be a priest. "Go, show thy self to the priest," was the command, to every recovering leper; and until the priest had entered into fellowship with him, and had given him a certificate of health, he could not be received into the Jewish camp.

The priest was the true brother of the people, chosen from among themselves, at all times to be approached; living iu their midst, in the very center of the camp, ready to make intercession for the sinful and the sorrowful. So it is with our Lord.

I read just now, in your hearing, that he can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and that he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Surely, you will never doubt that if Jesus perfectly sustains the office of priest, as he certainly does, he must be

the most approachable of beings, approachable by the poor sinner, who has given himself up to despair, whom only a sacrifice can save ; approachable by the foul harlot who is put outside the camp, whom only the blood can cleanse ; approachable by the miserable thief who has to suffer the punishment of his crimes, whom only the great High Priest can absolve.

No other man may care to touch you, O trembling outcast, but Jesus will. You may be separated from all of human kind, justly and righteously, by your iniquities, but you are not separated from that great Friend of sinners who at this very time is willing that publicans and sinners should draw near unto him.

As a third office, let me mention that the Lord Jesus is our Savior ; but I see not how he can be a Savior unless he can be approached by those who need to be saved. The priest and the Levite passed by on the other side when the bleeding man lay in the road to Jericho ; they were not saviors, therefore, and could not be, but he was the savior who came where the man was, stooped over him, and took wine and oil and poured them into the gaping fissures of his wounds, and lifted him up with tender love and set him on his own beast, and led him to the inn.

He was the true savior : and, O sinner, Jesus Christ will come just where you are, and your wounds of sin, even though they are putrid, shall not drive him away from you. His love shall overcome the nauseating offensiveness of your iniquity, for he is able and willing to save such as you are. I might mention many other of the offices of Christ, but these three will suffice. Cer-

tainly if the Spirit blesses them, you will be led to see that Jesus is not hard to reach.

2. Consider a few of his names and titles. Frequently Jesus is called the "Lamb." Blessed name! I do not suppose there is any one here who was ever afraid of a lamb; that little girl yonder, if she saw a lamb, would not be frightened. Every child seems almost instinctively to long to put its hand on the head of a lamb. O that you might come and put your hand on the head of Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

"Oh see how Jesus trusts himself
Unto our childish love,
As though by his free ways with us
Our earnestness to prove.

His sacred name a common word
On earth he loves to hear;
There is no majesty in him
Which love may not come near."

Again you find him called a Shepherd; no one is afraid of a shepherd. If you were traveling in the East, and you saw Bedouins or Turkish soldiery in the distance, you might be alarmed; but if some one said, "Oh, it is only a few shepherds," you would not he afraid of them. The sheep are not at all timid when near the shepherd. O poor, wandering sheep, you, perhaps, have come to be afraid of Christ, but there is no reason why you should be, for this heavenly Shepherd says, "I will seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day."

"See Israel's gentle Shepherd stands
With all engaging charms."

Timid, foolish, and wandering though you may be,

there is nothing in the good Shepherd to drive you away from him, but everything to entice you to come to him. Then, again, he is called our Brother, and one always feels that he may approach his brothet. I have no thought of trouble or distress which I would hesitate to communicate to my brother here, for he is so good and kind. I do not think I could be in any trouble which I should not expect him to do his best to help me out of. I never feel that there is any distance between him and me, nor do you, I hope, feel so with regard to your brothers. Even so, is it with this Brother born for adversity. Believer, how is it that you are sometimes so backward and so cold toward Jesus?

Christ is approachable.

"The light of love is round his feet,
His paths are never dim;
And he comes nigh to us when we
Dare not come nigh to him."

You need not think that your troubles are too trifling to bring to him; he has an open ear for the little daily vexations of life. Brethren, you can come to the good elder Brother at all hours; and when he blames you for coming, let me know.

He is called, too, a Friend; but he would be a very unfriendly friend who could not be approached by those he professed to love. If my friend puts a hedge around himself, and holds himself so very dignified that I may not speak with him, I would rather be without his friendship; but if he be a genuine friend, and I stand at his door knocking, he will say, "Come in, and welcome;

what can I do for you?" Such a friend is Jesus Christ. He is to be met with by all needy, seeking hearts.

3. There is room enough for enlargement here, but I have no time to say more, therefore I will give you another plea. Recollect his person. The person of our Lord Jesus Christ proclaims this truth with a trumpet voice. I say his person, because he is man, born of woman, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. The Lord Jesus Christ is God, but if he were God only, you might well stand at a distance, and shudder at the splendor of his majesty. But he is man as well as God, and so it comes to pass, as Dr. Watts puts it—

"'Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terrors to mo mind.

But if Immanuel's face appear,
My hope, my joy begins;
His name forbids my slavish fear,
His grace removes my sins,"

When I see Christ in the manger where the horned ox fed, or hanging on a woman's breast, or obedient to his parents, or "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," a poor man without a place whereon to lay his head, then I feel that I can freely come to him. Think of him as being precisely such as you are, in all and everything except sin, and then you will never have a thought that he will chide you for drawing near, or drive you away when you venture to supplicate him.

But I want especially to say to you that if you could but see my Master's person as he was when he was on

earth, you would have henceforth and for ever the thought that you might not come to him expelled from your mind.

I know not what may have been his beauties, or what may have been the appearance of his lovely countenance, but of this I am persuaded, that if he could but come here to-night, and I could vacate this platform for him whose shoe-latchet I am not worthy to unloose, you who groan under a sense of unworthiness would not run away.

If Moses stood here with his flaming countenance, you would shade your eyes, and ask that if you must look upon him he might wear a veil ; but if Christ were born, oh ! how you longing, seeking ones would gaze upon him ! There would be no drooping of the eyelids, no covering of the face, no alarm, no anguish—his face is too sweet for that.

And if the Master should walk down the aisles, the most timid of you would long to touch the hem of his garment and kiss the floor whereon he had set his feet. I know you would not fear to look into that face.

And then that voice, how would you be charmed, you poor, trembling seekers, if you heard him say, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me;" you would discover such meekness and lowliness in him, that you would not think ot starting back.

Oh ! if your eyes could but see him, I feel persuaded that, graciously drawn by his charms, your hearts would hasten to him.

Well, believer, come to him, come to him ; come close to him. Come with your troubles and tell him all

about them. Come with your sins and ask to have them washed away anew.

"Let us be simple with him, then,
Not backward, stiff, or cold,
As though our Bethlehem could be
What Sina was of old."

And you, poor, trembling sinner, come to him; come to him now, for he has said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Oh! if your eyes were opened to behold him, you would perceive that the glory of his person lies not in the splendor which repels, but in the majesty which divinely attracts.

4. If this suffice not, let me here remind you of the language of Christ. He proclaims his approachability in such words as these, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Ye horny-handed sons of toil, ye smiths and carpenters, ye plumbers and diggers, come unto me, yea, come all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. And again, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

He invites men to come; he pleads with them to come; and when they will not come he gently upbraids them with such words as these, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." And, agaiu, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." It is not "*I* would not," but "*ye* would not."

Why, the whole of Scripture, in its invitations, may

be said to be the language of Christ, and therein you find loving, pleading words of this kind, "Come, now, and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our god, for he will abundantly pardon."

All our blessed Lord's sermons were so many loving calls to poor, aching hearts to come and find what they needed in him. I pray that the Holy Spirit may give an effectual call to many of you to-night. It would gladden the heart of the Redeemer in the skies if you would come to him for salvation, for you may come, since there is no barrier between you and the Savior of men. What is it keeps you back? I repeat it with tears, what is it keeps you back?

The old proverb truly says that "actions speak louder than words," and, therefore, let us review the general ways and manners of the Redeemer. You may gather that he is the most approachable of persons from the actions of his life. He was always very busy, and busy about the most important of matters, and yet he never shut the door in the faee of any applicant.

Her Majesty's cabinet have to discuss most important political matters just now, but compared with the work which filled the Savior's hands and heart, their discussions are mere trifles. Our master might well have claimed seclusion, but he did not. He sought it, but he found none, save only at midnight, when he watched

and prayed. No sort of appeal for audience did Jesus frown upon.

There were certain mothers in the land, poor simple-minded women, and they took it into their heads one day that they would like to have the Master's hands put upon the heads of their little ones. So they came, bringing their boys and girls, but some of the disciples said, "The Master must not be disturbed by children; go ye your ways, and take your children back." But what said he? How different from his followers! he rebuked their harshness, and said: "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

You see he is a child's friend. Dear young people, think of that. Jesus does not drive you away, but though he is so great and glorious that all the angels of God worship him, yet he stoops to hear the prayers and praises of little children. Seek him now, for those who seek him early shall find him.

Let me tell you another story. There was a woman in the city who was a sinner. You know the meaning, the dark, sad meaning of that title in her case; I need not explain that. Poor soul! Her sin had caused her to be despised and shunned by everyone, but she had been forgiven, and in gratitude she poured the precious ointment on her beloved Savior's feet, and then wiped them with the hairs of her head; and when the Pharisee Simon would have had her rebuked, the loving Master said, "She loves much because she has had much forgiven."

He is approachable by all, then, even by the worst; even the harlot need not fear to draw near to him—his

touch can make her pure. I have noted one thing in Christ's life, and noted it with delight. Our Lord was always preaching, and he often grew weary, as we do, and therefore he wanted a little retirement, but the multitude came breaking in upou his solitude, following him on foot when he had sailed away to escape them , this was troublesome, and to us it would have been irritating, yet he never uttered an angry, fretful syllable. There was no rest for him, because of the eager crowd ; but did he ever say, "How those people tease me ; how they worry me"? No, never ; his big heart made him forget himself. He was approachable to all at all hours; even his meals were disturbed, but he was gentle toward those thoughtless intruders. Not once was he harsh and repulsive. His whole life proves the truth of the prophecy, "The bruised reed he will not break, and the smoking flax he will not quench." He graciously receives the weak and the feeble ones who come to him, and sends none empty away.

5. But, if you want the crowning argument, look yonder. The man who has lived a life of service, at last dies a felon's death ! Look upon his head girt with the crown of thorns ! Mark well his cheeks whence they have plucked off the hair ! See the spittle from those scornful mouths, staining his marred countenance ! Mark the crimson rivers which are flowing from his back where they have scourged him ! See his hands and his feet, which are pierced with the nails, and from which ensanguined rills are flowing ! Look to that face so full of anguish, listen to his cry, "I thirst, I thirst;" and as you see him there expiring, can you think that he will

spurn the seeker? As you see him turn his head and say to the dying thief by his side, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," you dare not belie him so much as to deem that you may not come to him. You will outrage your reason if you start back from Jesus crucified. The cross of Christ should be the center to which all hearts are drawn, the focus of desire, the pivot of hope, the anchorage of faith. You may come, sinner, black, vile, hellish sinner, you may come and have life even as the dying thief had it when he said, "Lord, remember me."

"There is life in a look at the crucified One."

Surely, you need not be afraid to come to him who went to Calvary for sinners. Why linger? Why hesitate? Why those blushes, sobs, and tears?

"Why art thou afraid to come,
And tell him all thy case?
He will not pronounce thy doom,
Nor frown thee from his face.

Wilt thou fear Immanuel?
Or dread the Lamb of God,
Who, to save thy soul from hell,
Has shed his precious blood?"

Did I hear a whisper, did anybody say that Christ is now in heaven and that he may have changed? Ah, groundless insinuation! Do you know what he is doing in heaven at this moment? He is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins. What a help that is to those who are coming to him! This repentance is the greatest want of coming sinners, and he from the skies supplies it.

Moreover, "he ever liveth to make intercession for

us." His occupation in the skies is to plead for those sinners whom he redeemed with his blood, and hence he is able to save them unto the uttermost. Since he is the intercessor for souls, there is no reason why you should start back, but every reason why you should boldly come to the throne of the heavenly grace, because you have a High Priest who is passed into the heavens.

"Compell'd by bleeding love,
Ye wandering sheep draw near;
Christ calls you from above—
His charming accents hear!
Let whosoever will now come,
In mercy's breast there still is room."

Here I leave this part of the subject. Some of you little know how heavily this sermon is hanging on my mind. I preach my very soul to you this day. I wish I knew how to preach so as to win some of you for my Lord, this evening; I should be glad to go even to the school of affliction if I might learn to preach more successfully. But I can do no more.

May the Eternal Spirit, in answer to the prayers of his people, which I hope are going up now, be pleased to make you feel the sweet attractions of the Cross of Christ, and may you come to him, so that it may be said again to-night, "Then draw near unto him, publicans and sinners."

The Pharisees and scribes formed the outside ring of Christ's hearers, but the inner circle consisted of the guilty, the heavy-laden and the lowly. They pressed as near to Christ as they could, that they might catch his every word; and besides there was an attractiveness about

his manner that drew them toward him. His mercy attracted their misery. They wanted him, and he desired them; they were thus well met. There will be an inner circle to-night when the gospel is preached, and it will not consist of the self-righteous. They that are full will not press to the table on which the gospel feast is spread, the hungry will be found nearest to the heavenly provision.

JESUS SEEKING LOST MAN.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, while he was here below, was continually in the pursuit of lost souls. He was seeking lost men and women, and it was for this reason that he went down among them, even among those who were most evidently lost, that be might find them. He took pains to put himself where he could come into communication with them, and he exhibited such kindliness towards them that in crowds they drew near to hear him. I dare say it was a queer-looking assembly, a disreputable rabble, which made the Lord Jesus its center. I am not astonished that the Pharisee, when he looked upon the congregation, sneered and said, "He collects around him the pariahs of our community, the wretches who collect taxes for the foreigner of God's free people; and the fallen women of the towns, and such-like riffraff make up his audiences; and he, instead of repelling them, receives them, welcomes them, looks upon them as a class to whom he has a peculiar relationship. He even eats with them.

Did he not go into the house of Zaccheus, and the house of Levi, and partake of the feasts which these low people made for him?"

We cannot tell you all the Pharisees thought, it might not be edifying to attempt it; but they thought as badly of the Lord as they possibly could, because of the company which surrounded him.

And so, he designs in this parable to defend himself; not that he cared much about what they might think, but that they might have no excuse for speaking so bitterly of him. He tells them that he was seeking the host, and where should he be found but among those whom he was seeking?

Should a physician shun the sick? Should a shepherd avoid the lost sheep? Was he not exactly in his right position when there "drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him"?

Our divine Lord defended himself by what is called an *argumentum ad hominem*, an argument to the men themselves; for he said, "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, does not go after that which is lost, until he find it?"

No argument tells more powerfully upon men than one which comes close home to their own daily life, and the Savior put it so. They were silenced, if they were not convinced. It was a peculiarly strong argument, because in their case it was only a sheep that they would go after, but in his case it was something infinitely more precious than all the flocks of sheep that ever fed on Sharon or Carmel; for it was the soul of man he sought to save.

The argument had in it not only the point of peculiar adaptation, but a force at the back of it unusually powerful for driving it home upon every honest mind. It

may be opened out in this fashion: "If you men would each of you go after a lost sheep, and follow in its track until you found it, how much more may I go after lost souls, and follow them in all their wanderings until I can rescue them?"

The going after the sheep is a part of the parable our Lord meant them to observe; the shepherd pursues a route he would never think of pursuing if it were only for his own pleasure; his way is not selected for his own ends, but for the sake of the stray sheep.

He takes a track up hill and down dale, far into a desert, or into some dark wood, simply because the sheep has gone that way, and he must follow it until found.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, as a matter of taste and pleasure, would never have been found among the publicans and sinners, nor among any of our guilty race: if he had consulted his own ease and comfort he would have consorted only with pure and holy angels, and the great Father above; but he was not thinking of himself, his heart was set upon the lost ones, and therefore he went where the lost sheep were; "for the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

The more steadily you look at this parable the more clearly you will see that our Lord's answer was complete. We need not regard it exclusively as an answer to Pharisees, but we may look at it as an instruction to ourselves; for it is quite as complete in that direction. May the good Spirit instruct us as we muse upon it.

JESUS ABLE TO SAVE.

But, now, consider a second matter which may set

this more clearly before us. Think of the Son of God, who is indeed the true bread of life for sinners.

Sinner, I return to my personal address. Thou needest a Savior; and thou mayest well be encouraged when thou seest that a Savior is provided—provided by God, since it is certain he would not make a mistake in the provision. But consider who the Savior is. He is himself God. Jesus, who came from heaven for our redemption, was not an angel, else might we tremble to trust the weight of our sin upon him. He was not mere man, or he could but have suffered as a substitute for one, if indeed for one; but he was very God of very God, in the beginning with the Father.

And does such a one come to redeem? Is there room to doubt as to his ability, if that be the fact? I do confess this day, that if my sins were ten thousand times heavier than they are, yea, and if I had all the sins of this crowd in addition piled upon me, I could trust Jesus with them all at this moment, now I know him to be the Christ of God. He is the mighty God, and by his pierced hand the burden of our sin is easily removed; he blots out our sins, he casts them into the depths of the sea.

But, ah! the master proof that in Christ Jesus there is "bread enough and to spare," is the cross. Will you follow me a moment, will you follow him, rather, to Gethsemane? Can you see the bloody sweat as it falls upon the ground in his agony? Can you think of his scourging before Herod and Pilate? Can you trace him along the *Via Dolorosa* of Jerusalem? Will your tender hearts endure to see him nailed to the tree, and lifted up

to bleed and die? This is but the shell; as for the inward kernel of his sufferings, no language can describe it, neither can conception peer into it. The everlasting God laid sin on Christ, and where the sin was laid there fell the wrath. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief,"

Now. he that died upon the cross was God's only begotten Son. Can you conceive a limit to the merit of such a Savior's death? I know there are some who think it necessary to their system of theology to limit the merit of the blood of Jesus: if my system of theology needed such a limitation, I would cast it to the winds. I cannot, dare not, allow the thought to find a lodging in my mind; it seems so near akin to blasphemy.

In Christ's finished work I see an ocean of merit; my plummet finds no bottom, my eye discovers no shore. There must be sufficient efficacy in the blood of Christ, if God had so willed it, to have saved not only all this world, but ten thousand worlds, had they transgressed the Maker's law.

Once admit infinity into the matter, and limit is out of the question. Having a divine person for an offering, it is not consistent to conceive of limited value; bound and measure are terms inapplicable to the divine sacrifice. The intent of the divine purpose fixes the application of the infinite offering, but does not change it into a finite work. In the atonement of Christ Jesus there is "bread enough and to spare;" even as Paul wrote to Timothy, "He is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe."

But now, let me lead you to another point of solemnly

joyful consideration, and that is the Holy Spirit. To believe and love the Trinity is to possess the key of theology. We spoke of the Father, we spoke of the Son; let us now speak of the Holy Spirit.

We do him all too little honor, for the Holy Trinity condescends to come to earth and dwell in our hearts; and notwithstanding all our provocations he still abides within his people. Now, sinner, thou needest a new life and thou needest holiness, for both of these are necessary to make thee fit for heaven. Is there a provision for this? The Holy Spirit is provided and given in the covenant of grace; and surely in Him there is "enough and to spare."

What cannot the Holy Spirit do? Being divine, nothing can be beyond His power. Look at what He has already done. He moved upon the face of chaos, and brought it into order; all the beauty of creation arose beneath His moulding breath.

We ourselves must confess with Elihu, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life."

Think of the great deeds of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, when men unlearned spake with tongues of which they knew not a syllable aforetime, and the flames of fire upon them were also within them, so that their hearts burned with zeal and courage, to which they had hitherto been strangers.

Think of the Holy Spirit's work on such a one as Saul of Tarsus. That persecutor foams blood, he is a very wolf, he would devour the saints of God at Damascus, and yet, within a very few moments, you hear him say,

"Who art thou, Lord?" and yet again, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" His heart is changed; the Spirit of God has new created it; the adamant is melted in a moment into wax.

Many of us stand before you as the living monuments of what the Holy Ghost can do, and we can assure you from our own experience, that there is no inward evil which cannot be overcome, no lustful desire of the flesh which He cannot subdue, no obduracy of the affections He cannot melt.

Is anything too hard for the Lord? Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Surely, no sinner can be beyond the possibility of mercy when the Holy Spirit condescends to be the agent of human conversion.

O sinner, if thou perish, it is not because the Holy Spirit wants power, or the blood of Jesus lacks efficacy, or the Father fails in love; it is because thou believest not in Christ, but dost abide in willful rebellion, refusing the abundant bread of life which is placed before thee.

JOB.

Job's dire distress was aggravated by the remarks of his friends. Eliphaz, the Temanite, opened fire against him in such words as these: "Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him that was failing, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. But now

it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled." As much as to say, you can preach, but you cannot practice. Where are now your sermons and your advices to others?

It was a shameful thing thus to throw in the good man's teeth his testimonies in former days; but Job, who under all his sorrow, always retained his clearness of intellect and singular sbrewdness, took the words of Eliphaz and used them for his own comfort. They were bread and meat to him, though brought in a raven's mouth.

"Yes," says he, "I have comforted many, and my words have instructed the ignorant and strengthened the feeble, and this is so much my comfort in the hour of my affliction that I dare not even ask God to let loose his hand upon me and end my life. Let him not spare me, for I have the testimony of my conscience that I have not been disloyal to my God. The taunt of my accuser proves that I have not concealed the words of the Holy One."

It is always well to be able thus to turn the enemy's guns upon himself, and to extract comfort from that which was meant to grieve us.

Job made no idle boast when he said that he had not concealed the words of the Holy One, for we know from his history that he had been a bold confessor of the truth of God. We are informed that he was carefully watchful as to his own family that the words of the Holy One should be tbere esteemed and known, especially that grandest of all holy words concerning sacrifice and atonement: for we read that when his children had kept birth-

days at each other's houses and had fulfilled their days of feasting, "Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, it may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually."

He was earnest for the purity of his family and the keeping up of the sacrifices typical of the cleansing of sin: and thus he made known to his descendants the central word of all the words of the Holy One.

Even in the time of his affliction the patriarch had not spoken other than according to the mind of God. What said he when he had lost all his possessions, and was left without a child? "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; and blessed be the name of the Lord."

And when his wife, seeing him covered with a loathsome disease, bade him curse God and die, he did not withhold his testimony from her, but said, "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

These were words given him of the Lord in the moment of his need, and he shunned not to utter them with all his heart. The inspired testimony about this holy man is that "in all this did not Job sin with his lips."

It is clear that in his prosperity Job was a most faithful witness for God. We will not speculate about the time or the place in which he lived; but wherever he lived he was a man of great influence, and was held in high esteem.

He says, "When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street, the young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth."

This influence was always exerted for the cause of truth and righteousness, which is always the cause of God. In the twenty-ninth chapter he says of himself, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was as a robe and a diadem."

He was thus by his conduct a perpetual protest against sin, a continued proclamation of justice, righteousness, mercy, and love, in the age in which he lived; and he could, therefore, say without any word of egotism, "I have not concealed the words of the Holy One."

This was now a comfort to him when all other comforts failed: he knew that his affliction was not the fruit of a treacherous departure from God, or a cowardly concealment of his faith. He felt that he could face death, and even long for it, because he had been loyal to his God, and faithful to the light which had been vouchsafed him from on high.

It was not self-righteousness which led Job to speak thus, but only such a use of the sure evidences of grace as would be natural and proper in any godly man in the

hour of his extremity. It is the nature of obedience to yield peace to the heart, and no one can be blamed for enjoying that peace. It cannot be wrong for our consciences to bear testimony to the sincerity and purity of our lives, nor wrong that when our hearts condemn us not, we have confidence towards God. He who is most undivided in his faith in Jesus may, nevertheless, derive comfort from having been enabled to be loyal to his God.

Did not Paul bless God for much the same faithfulness as Job claimed when he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith"?

Happy shall be he who has a clear testimony within his soul, that he has declared the truth of God in all honesty and earnestness, even to the end.

Job had not refrained from an open confession of his own faith in God; he had been known in the gates of the city as a worshipper of the Lord, a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil. He had never hidden his faith, but had owned one God, whom he here calls the Holy *One*.

While gods many and lords many divided the fealty of nations, Job was true to the one only God; and believed his words as they were revealed to him. Nor was he content with an open confession of his own faith, Job had made a continued communication of what he knew to others. He had taught his family,—there, all teaching should begin. He had taught his fellow-citizens by his example—the most powerful of all teaching. Never had he wandered into idolatry, or worshipped the sun when it shined, or kissed his hand to the queen of heaven: but, on the contrary, he had avowed the one

and only Lord without fear. He asks, "Did I fear a multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me that I kept silence?"

So faithful had he been that he cries, "Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity." This was high ground to take, but it evidently strengthened the good man's heart to bear his troubles, and it will do the same for us if we can win the same witness from our consciences.

Job, according to the language of our text, evidently had a great reverence for every word of the Lord. He would not have used that term, "the Holy One," if he had not felt the holiness of the words themselves, and if he had not stood in solemn awe of Him who spake them. He felt that they must not be concealed, because the words of the Holy One should have free course, and be published abroad.

Should not the word of a king be circulated through the length and breadth of his dominions? Have you and I such a reverence for every revealed truth! Do we stand in awe of every word of God? If we do it will be well for us if we practically express our homage after the fashion of David, who said, "With my lips have I declared all the judgments of Thy mouth."

The words which God speaks are uttered that *we* may speak them. It is the best homage to a word to hear it and to repeat it.

Let us proclaim God's words abroad: they are light and are not meant to be hidden. Such candles ought never to be put under a bushel. To hide the divine, would be a great sin against the Most High, and to warn

you against it will be the aim of this morning's discourse. I shall speak with the earnest prayer that both to myself and to each one of you there may be a personal voice from God stirring every conscience as to this matter, and making each one of us enquire whether or no we also can say, "I have not concealed the words of the Holy One."

JUDAS.

I SHALL not detain you long, I trust, but I must now give you another bad case; the worst of all. It is the repentance of despair. Will you turn to the 27th chapter of Matthew, and the 4th verse? There you have a dreadful case of the repentance of despair.

You will recognize the character the moment I read the verse: "And Judas said, I have sinned."

Yes, Judas the traitor, who had betrayed his Master, when he saw that his Master was condemned, "repented, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood,' and cast down the pieces in the temple, and went" and what?—"and *hanged himself.*" Here is the worst kind of repentance of all; in fact, I know not that I am justified in calling it repentance; it must be called remorse of conscience.

But Judas did confess his sin, and then went and hanged himself. Oh! that dreadful, that terrible, that hideous confession of despair. Have you never seen it?

If you never have, then bless God that you never were called to see such a sight. I have seen it once in my life, I pray God I may never see it again,—the repentance of the man who sees death staring him in the face, and who says, "I have sinned."

You tell him that Christ has died for sinners; and he answers, "There is no hope for me; I have cursed God to his face; I have defied him; my day of grace I know is past; my conscience is seared with a hot iron; I am dying and I know I shall be lost!"

Such a case as that happened long ago, you know, and is on record—the case of Francis Spira—the most dreadful case, perhaps, except that of Judas, which is upon record in the memory of man.

Oh! my hearers, will any of you have such a repentance? If you do, it will be a beacon to all persons who sin in future; if you have such a repentance as that, it will be a warning to generations yet to come.

In the life of Benjamin Keach—and he also was one of my predecessors—I find the case of a man who had been a professor of religion, but had departed from the profession, and had gone into awful sin. When he came to die, Keach, with many other friends, went to see him, but they could never stay with him above five minutes at a time, for he said, "Get ye gone; it is of no use your coming to me; I have sinned away the Holy Ghost; I am like Esau, I have sold my birthright, and though I am seeking it carefully with tears, I can never find it again."

And then he would repeat dreadful words like these, "My mouth is filled with gravel stones, and I drink

wormwood day and night. Tell me not, tell me not of Christ! I know he is a Savior, but I hate him and he hates me. I know I must die; I know I must perish!" And then followed doleful cries, and hideous noises, such as none could bear. They returned again in his placid moments, only to stir him up once more, and make him cry out in his despair, "I am lost! I am lost! It is of no use your telling me anything about it!"

Ah! there may be a man here who may have such a death as that; let me warn him, ere he come to it; and may God, the Holy Spirit, grant that that man may be turned unto God, and made a true penitent, and then he need not have any fear; for he who has had his sins washed away in a Savior's blood, need not have any remorse for his sins, for they are pardoned through the Redeemer.

PAUL.

AS MISSIONARY.

In the first place, we have not men with Apostolic zeal. Converted in a most singular way, by a direct interposition from heaven, Paul, from that time forward, became an earnest man. He had always been earnest, in his sin and in his persecutions; but after he heard that voice from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" and had received the mighty office of an apostle, and he had been sent forth a chosen vessel to the Gentiles, you can scarce conceive the deep, the awful earnestness which he manifested.

Whether he did eat, or drink, or whatsoever he did, he did all for the glory of his God; he never wasted an hour; he was employing his time either in ministering with his own hands unto his necessities, or else lifting those hands in the Synagogue, on Mars-hill, or anywhere where he could command the attention of the multitude. His zeal was so earnest, and so burning, that he could not (as we unfortunately do) restrain himself within a little sphere; but he practiced the Word everywhere.

It was not enough for him to have it handed down that he was the Apostle of Pisidia, but he must go also to Pamphylia; it was not enough that he should be the great preacher of Pamphylia and Pisidia, but he must go also to Attalia; and when he had preached throughout all Asia, he must needs take ship to Greece, and preach there also.

I believe not only once did Paul hear in his dream the men of Macedonia saying, "Come over and help us," but every day and hour he heard the cry in his ears from multitudes of souls, "Paul, Paul, come over and help us."

He could not restrain himself from preaching.

"Woe is unto me," he said, "if I preach not the gospel. God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ."

Oh! if you could have seen Paul preach, you would not have gone away as you do from some of us, with half a conviction, that we do not mean what we say. His eyes preached a sermon without his lips, and his lips preached it, not in a cold and frigid manner, but every word fell with an overwhelming power upon the hearts

of his hearers. He preached with power, because he was in downright earnest. You had a conviction, when you saw him, that he was a man who felt he had a work to do and must do it, and could not contain himself unless he did do it. He was the kind of preacher whom you would expect to see walk down the pulpit stairs straight into his coffin, and then stand before his God, ready for his last account.

Where are the men like that man? I confess I cannot claim that privilege, and I seldom hear a solitary sermon which comes up to the mark in earnest, deep, passionate longing for the souls of men.

We have no eyes now like the eyes of the Savior, which could weep over Jerusalem; we have few voices like that earnest, impassioned voice which seemed perpetually to cry, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not."

If ministers of the gospel were more hearty in their work of preaching; if, instead of giving lectures and devoting a large part of their time to literary and political persuits, they would preach the Word of God, and preach it as if they were preaching for their own lives, ah! then, my brethren, we might expect great success; but we cannot expect it while we go about it in a half-hearted way, and have not that zeal, that earnestness, that deep purpose which characterized those men of old.

Then, again, I take it, we have not men in our days who can preach like Paul—as to their faith. What did Paul do? He went to Philippi: did he know a soul

there? Not one. He had his Master's truth, and he believed in the power of it. He was unattended and devoid of pomp, or show, or parade; he did not go to a pulpit with a soft cushion in it to address a respectable congregation, but he walked through the streets and began to preach to the people.

He went to Corinth, to Athens, alone, single-handed, to tell the people the gospel of the blessed God. Why? Because he had faith in the gospel, and believed it would save souls, and hurl down idols from their thrones. He had no doubt about the power of the gospel; but now-a-days, my brethren, we have not faith in the gospel we preach. How many there are who preach a gospel, which they are afraid will not save souls; and, therefore, they add little bits of their own to it in order, as they think, to win men to Christ!

We have known men who believed Calvinistic doctrines, but who preached Calvinism in the morning and Arminianism in the evening, because they were afraid God's gospel would not convert sinners, so they would manufacture one of their own.

I hold that a man who does not believe his gospel to be able to save men's souls, does not believe it at all. If God's truth will not save men's souls, man's lies cannot; if God's truth will not turn men to repentance, I am sure there is nothing in this world that can.

When we believe the gospel to be powerful, then we shall see it is powerful. If I walk into this pulpit, and say, "I know what I preach is true," the world says I am an egotist. "The young man is dogmatical!"

Ay, and the young man means to be; he glories in it,

he keeps it to himself as one of his peculiar titles, or he does most firmly believe what he preaches.

God forbid that I should ever come tottering up the pulpit stairs to teach anything I was not quite sure of, something which I hoped might save sinners, but of which I was not exactly certain. When I have faith in my doctrines, those doctrines will prevail, for confidence is the winner of the palm.

He who hath courage enough te grasp the standard, and hold it up, will be sure enough to find followers. He who says, "I know," and asserts it boldly in his Master's name, without disputing, will not be long before he will find men who will listen to what he says, and who will say, "This man speaks with authority, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees."

That is one reason why we do not succeed: we have not faith in the gospel. We send educated men to India in order to confound the learned Brahmins. Nonsense! Let the Brahmins say what they like; have we any business to dispute with them? "Oh, but they are so intellectual and so clever." What have we to do with that? We are not to seek to be clever in order to meet them. Leave the men of the world to combat their metaphysical errors; we have merely to say, "This is truth: he that believeth it shall be saved, and he that denieth it shall be damned."

We have no right to come down from the high ground of divine authoritative testimony; and until we maintain that ground, and come out as we ought to do, girded with the belt of divinity—preaching not what *may* be true,

but asserting that which God has most certainly revealed —we shall not see success.

We want a deeper faith in our gospel ; we want to be quite sure of what we preach. Brethren, I take it we have not the faith of our fathers. I feel myself a poor driveling thing in point of faith. Why, methought sometimes I could believe anything ; but now a little difficulty comes before me ; I am timid, and I fear. It is when I preach with this unbelief in my heart that I preach unsuccessfully ; but when I preach with faith and can say, "I know my God has said, that in the self-same hour he will give me what I shall preach, and careless of man's esteem, I preach what I believe to be true," then it is that God owns faith and crowns it with his own crown.

Again : we have not enough self-denial, and that is one reason why we do not prosper. Far be it from me to say aught against the self-denial of those worthy brethren who have left their counrry to cross the stormy deep and preach the Word. We hold them to be men who are to be had in honor ; but still I ask, where is the self-denial of the apostle now-a-days ? I think one of the greatest disgraces that ever was cast upon the church in these days was that last mission to Ireland.

Men went over to Ireland, but like men who have valor's better part, brave, bold men, they came back again, which is about all we can say of the matter.

Why do they not go there again ? Why, they say the Irish "hooted" them. Now, don't you think you see Paul taking a microscope out of his pocket, and looking at the little man who should say to him, "I shall not go there to preach because the Irish hooted me ?"

"What!" he says, "is this a preacher?—what a small edition of a preacher he must be, to be sure!"

"Oh! but they threw stones at us, you have no idea how badly they treated us!"

Just tell that to the Apostle Paul. I am sure you would be ashamed to do so. "Oh! but in some places the police interfered, and said that we should only create a riot."

What would Paul have said to that? The police interfering! I did not know that we had any right to care about governments. Our business is to preach the Word, and if we must be put in the stocks, there let us lie; there would come no hurt of it at last.

"Oh! but they might have killed some of us." That is just it. Where is that zeal which counted not its life dear so that it might win Christ? I believe that the killing of a few of our ministers would have prospered Christianity.

However we might mourn over it, and none more than myself, I say that the murder of a dozen of them would have been no greater ground for grief than the slanghter of our men by hundreds in a successful fight for hearths and homes. I would count my own blood most profitably shed in so holy a struggle.

How did the gospel prosper aforetime? Were there not some who laid down their lives for it; and did not others walk to victory over their slain bodies; and must it not be so now? If we are to start back because we are afraid of being killed, heaven knows when the gospel is to spread over the world—we do not.

What have other missionaries done? Have they not

braved death in its direst forms, and preached the Word amid countless dangers? My brethren, we say again, we find no fault, for we, ourselves, might err in the same manner; but we are sure we are therein not like Paul. He went to a place where they stoned him with stones, and dragged him out as dead. Did he say, "Now, for the future I will not go where they will ill-treat me!"

No, for he says, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, thrice I suffered shipwreck."

I am sure we have not the self-denial of the apostles. We are more carpet-knights and Hyde-park-warriors. When I go to my own house and think how comfortable and happy I am, I say to myself, "How little I do for my Master! I am ashamed that I cannot deny myself for His truth, and go everywhere preaching His Word." I look with pity upon people who say, "Do not preach so often; you will kill yourself." O my God, what would Paul have said to such a thing as that? "Take care of your constitution; you are rash; you are enthusiastic."

When I compare myself with one of those men of old, I say, "Oh, that men should be found calling themselves Christians, who seek to stop our work of faith and labor of love, for the sake of a little consideration about the 'constitution,' which gets all the stronger for preaching God's Word."

I have one more remark to make here with regard to the style in which we go to work. I fear that we have not enough of the divine method of itineracy. Paul was a great itinerant: he preached in one place, and there were twelve converted there; he made a church at once;

he did not stop till he had five hundred; but when he had twelve, he went off to another place. A holy woman takes him in; she has a son and daughter; they are saved and baptized—there is another church. Then he goes on; wherever he goes the people believe and are baptized, wherever he meets a family who believe, he or his companion baptizes all the house, and goes about his way still forming churches and appointing elders over them.

This was no doubt a special vision sent of God for tbe direction of the Apostle Paul. For we are told in the next verse, that they assuredly gathered from this vision, that the Lord had called them to preach the gospel in Macedonia. And yet the vision may be very readily accounted for by natural causes. Men usually dream of that which is most upon their minds. Who would marvel that the miser should, in his restless sleep, be pictured to his own sight as counting over his gold? Who wonders that the morher's dream is often concerning her fair infant? Who marvels that the wife frequently dreams of shipwrecks, when, in the stormy night, she lies upon her bed, her last thoughts having been exercised concerning her husband at sea? You wonder not that the soldier in the trenches dreams of battle.

And hence we cannot marvel that the Apostle Paul, whose whole soul was full of his Master's cause, should have a vision in the night concerning a new field of labor, which God had intended to open up to him.

You will remember that the apostle was, on this occasion, in a peculiar condition. He at first endeavored to preach the gospel in Phrygia and Galatia, but he was

forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia. And "after they had come to Mysia, they essayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not."

The apostle was like Abraham of old; he went forth, not knowing whither he went. There was a certain path which he must take, and when he strove to turn either to the right hand or to the left, the Spirit directly forbade him, and he was compelled to go on till he came to the sea-port of Troas.

There, wearied with his journey, he cast himself upon his couch, and in the midst of the night a vision appeared unto him. A man who, by his brogue and his dress, was discovered to be a Macedonian, said to him, "Come over and help us."

God sometimes tells men in their sleep the secret they could not discover when they were awake. We have heard of the preacher who, tired late on Saturday evening, has been unable to think of a discourse, in the middle of the night has dreamed it through, and on the morrow has ascended his pulpit and preached it. What wonder, then, that the Apostle Paul, specially directed by the Spirit of God, after all day long wearily exercising his mind as to the journey God intended him to take, should, after all, when in his sleep, have a vision from on high, teaching him where he should go.

"Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."—Acts xxvii. 25.

The presence of a brave man in the hour of danger, is a very great comfort to his companions. It is a grand thing to observe Paul so bold, so calm, in the midst of all the hurly-burly of the storm, and talking so cheer-

fully, and so encouragingly, to the crew, and to the soldiery, and to the prisoners.

You must have seen in many events in history that it is the one man, after all, that wins the battle: all the rest play their parts well when the one heroic spirit lifts the standard. Every now and then we hear some simpleton or other talking against a "one-man ministry," when it has been a one-man ministry from the commencement of the world to the present day; and whenever you try to have any other form of ministry, except that of each individual saint discharging his own ministry, and doing it thoroughly, and heartily, and independently, and bravely, in the sight of God, you very soon run upon quick-sands.

Recollect, Christian man, that wherever you are placed you are to be *the* one man, and you are to have courage and independence of spirit and strength of mind received from God, that with it you may comfort those around you who are of the weaker sort.

So act that your confidence in God shall strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees, and your calm, quiet look shall say to them that are of a faint heart, "Be strong; fear not,"

If you are to do this, and I trust you will do it, in the sick chamber, in the midst of the troubles of life, in the church, and everywhere else, you must be strong yourself. Take it as a good rule that nothing can come out of you that is not in you. You cannot render real encouragement to others unless you have courage within yourself.

Now, the reason why Paul was able to embolden his

companions was that he had encouraged himself in his God; he was calm, or else he could not have calmed those around him. Imagine him excited and all in a tremble, and yet saying, "Sirs, be of good cheer."

Why, they would have thought that he mocked them, and they would have replied, "Be of good cheer yourself, sir, before you encourage us."

So, my dear brothers and sisters, you must trust God and be calm and strong, or else you will not be of such service in the world and in the church as you ought to be. Get full, and then you will run over, but you can never fill others till you become full yourselves. Be yourselves "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," and that you will be as a standard lifted up to which the timid will rally.

But notice that Paul's faith was faith in God. "I believe God," said he. Nobody else in the ship could see any hope in God. With the exception of one or two like-minded with Paul, they thought that God had forsaken them, if, indeed, they thought of God at all.

But there had that night stood by Paul's side an angel fresh from heaven, bright with the divine presence, and, strengthened by his message, Paul said, "I believe God." That was something more than saying "I believe *in* God": this many do, and derive but slender comfort from the belief. But "I believe *God*, believe *Him*, believe His truthfulness, believe the word that He has spoken, believe in His mercy and His power. I believe God." This made Paul calm, peaceful, strong. Would to God that all professing Christians did really believe God.

Believing God, he believed the message that God had sent him, drank in every word and was revived by it. God had said, "Fear not, Paul; I have given thee all them that sail with thee."

He believed it. He felt certain that God, having promised it, was able to perform it; and amidst the howling of the winds Paul clung to that promise. He was sure that no hair of any man's head would be harmed. The Lord had said the preserving word, and it was enough for his servant. Has He said it, and shall He not do it? Has He spoken it, and shall it not come to pass? He believed God that it should be even as it was told him.

When Paul wrote this ever-memorable text, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," he placed it in connection with himself. I would have you carefully notice the context. Twelfth verse:—"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

You see, the apostle had spoken of himself, and then it was that the Holy Spirit put it into his mind to write of the glorious salvation of which he was so notable a subject.

Truly it was a seasonable and suggestive connection

in which to place this glorious gospel text. What he preached to others was to be seen in himself.

When I read to you the story of Saul's conversion, suppose I had finished it by making the remark, "This is a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," you would all have said, "That is true, and it is a natural inference from the narrative."

Such a remark would have served as the moral of the whole story. It is an easy and a simple inference from such a conversion, that Christ Jesus must have come into the world to save sinners. See, then, why Paul uttered it in this particular place. He could not help bringing his own case forward; but when he did bring it forward it was to add emphasis to this declaration that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

It is my conviction that our Lord in infinite wisdom intends that his ministers should themselves be proofs of the doctrines which they teach. If a young man, a very young man, stands up to tell you of the experience of an aged Christian, you say at once, "That may be very true, but you cannot prove it, for you are not an aged person yourself."

If one who has been privileged in the providence of God to enjoy the comforts of life stands up to preach upon the consolations of the Spirit in poverty, you say, "Yes, that is very true, but you cannot speak from experience yourself."

Hence, the Lord likes His servants to have such an experience that their testimony shall have a man at the back of it. He would have their lives sustain and explain their testimonies. When Paul said that Christ

came into the world to save sinners, his own conversion, his own joy in the Lord, were proof positive of it. He was a witness who had tasted and handled the good Word of life to which he witnessed.

Paul went to heaven years ago, but his evidence is not vitiated by that fact; for a truthful statement is not affected by the lapse of time. If a statement was made yesterday, it is just as truthful as if you were hearing it to-day; and if it were made, as this was, eighteen hundred years ago, yet, if true then (and nobody disputed it in Paul's day), it is true now.

The facts recorded in the gospels are as much facts now as ever, and they ought to have the same influence upon our minds as they had upon the minds of the apostles.

At this moment the statement that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners has Paul still at the back of it. "He being dead yet speaketh." Oh, you who are burdened with your sins, I want you to see Saul of Tarsus before you at this moment, and to hear him say, with penitent voice, in your presence, "The Lord Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Doubt not the statement, for the man is the evidence of it. He who saved Paul can save you: yea, he is willing now to display his power upon you. Be not disobedient to the heavenly message.

First, then, who are the chief of sinners? Paul says that he was the chief. I think, however, that he was only one of the regiment. There are different classes of sinners, and some are greater and some less. All men are truly sinners, but all men are not equally sinners.

They are all in the mire; but they have not all sunk to an equal depth in it. It is true they have all fallen deep enough to perish in sin, unless the grace of God prevent; yet there are differences in the degrees of guilt, and there will doubtless be differences in the degrees of punishment.

Some are the chief of sinners in the same way as the Apostle Paul, for they have persecuted the church of God. Paul, who was then called Saul, had given his vote against Stephen; and when Stephen was stoned, he kept the clothes of them that murdered him. He felt that blood lying upon his soul long afterward, and he bemoaned it.

Would not you, if you had been a helper at the murder of some child of God, feel that you were among the chief of sinners? If you had been willingly and wilfully, maliciously and eagerly, a helper in putting a man of God like Stephen to death, you would write yourself down as a sinner of crimson dye? Why, I think that I should say, "God may forgive me, but I will never forgive myself." It would seem such a horrid crime to lie upon one's soul. Yet this was merely a beginning. Saul was like a leopard, who, having once tasted blood, must always have his tongue in it. His very breath was threatening, and his delight was slaughter. He harassed the people of God: he made great havoc of the saints: he compelled them, he says, to blaspheme: he had them beaten in the synagogues, driven from city to city, and even put to death.

This must have remained upon his heart as a dark memory, even after the Lord Jesus Christ had fully for-

given him. When he knew, as Paul did know, that he was a justified man through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, yet he must always have felt a smiting at his heart to think that these innocent lambs had been worried by him; that for no other reason but that they were lovers of the Crucified, he had panted for their blood.

This matter of deadly persecution placed Saul head and shoulders above other sinners. This was the top-stone of the pyramid of his sin, "because I persecuted the church of Christ."

I thank God that there is no man here who has that particular form of sin upon his conscience in having actually put to death or joined in the slaughter of any child of God. The laws of our country have happily prevented your being stained with that foul offence, and I bless the Lord that it is so. Yet, if there should be such among those who are hearing these words, or among those who shall one day read them, I must confess that they are, indeed, numbered among the chief of sinners, and I pray God to grant that they may obtain mercy as Saul did.

I would fain hope that you are saying, "I do now repent, and by God's grace I will go." If so, let me tell you there are a great many in heaven who once, like you, said, "I will not." but they afterwards repented and are now saved.

I will give you one picture. Yonder, I see a company of men on horseback, and there is one, the proudest of them all, to whom they act as a guard; they are going to Damascus, that he may take Christians to prison and compel them to blaspheme. Saul of Tarsus is the name

of that cruel, murderous persecutor. When Stephen was put to death, God said to this man Saul, "Go, work in my vineyard," but Saul said plainly, "I will not," and to prove his enmity, he helped to put Stephen to death. There he is riding in hot haste, upon his evil errand, none more set and determined against the Lord. Yet my Lord Jesus can tame the lion, and even make a lamb of him.

As he rides along, a bright light is seen, brighter than the sun at noonday; he falls from his horse, he lies trembling on the ground, and he hears a voice out of heaven, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Lifting up his eyes with astonishment, he sees that he had ignorantly been persecuting the Son of God.

What a change that one discovery wrought in him.

That voice, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest," broke his hard heart, and won him to the cause. You know how three days after that, that proud and bigoted man was baptized upon profession of the faith of Christ, whom he had just now persecuted! and if you want to see an earnest preacher, where can you find a better than the Apostle Paul, who, with heart on fire, writes again and again, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I hope there is a Saul here, who is to be struck down this morning. Lord, strike him down! Eternal Spirit, strike him down *now!* You did not know, perhaps, that you had been fighting God, but you thought the religion of Jesus to be a foolish dream. You did not know that you had insulted the dying Savior; now you do know it,

may your conscience be affected, and from this day forth may you serve the Lord.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."—2 Corinthians iv. 6.

The apostle is explaining the reason for his preaching Christ with so much earnestness: he had received divine light, and he felt bound to spread it. One great motive power of a true ministry is trusteeship. The Lord has put us in trust with the gospel; he has filled us with a treasure with which we are to enrich the world. The text explains in full what it is with which the Lord has entrusted us: he has bestowed upon us "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," and it is ours to reflect the light, to impart the knowledge, to manifest the glory, to point to the Sávior's face, and to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Having such a work before us, we faint not, but press onward with our whole heart.

With no other preface than this we shall ask your attention this morning to the subject of that knowledge in which Paul delighted so much. What was this knowledge which to his mind was the chief of all, and the most worthy to be spread? It was the knowledge of God.

Truly a most needful and proper knowledge for all God's creatures. For a man not to know his Maker and Ruler is deplorable ignorance indeed. The proper study of mankind is God. Paul not only knew that there is a God, for he had known that before his conversion · none

can more surely believe in the Godhead than did Paul as a Jew. Nor does he merely intend that he had learned somewhat of the character of God, for that also he had known from the Old Testament Scriptures before he was met with on the way to Damascus; but now he had come to know God in a closer, clearer, and surer way, for he had seen him incarnate in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle had also received the knowledge of "the glory of God." Never had the God of Abraham appeared so glorious as now. God in Christ Jesus had won the adoring wonder of the apostle's instructed mind. He had known Jehovah's glory as the One and only God, he had seen that glory in creation declared by the heavens and displayed upon the earth, he had beheld that glory in the law which blazed from Sinai and shed its insufferable light upon the face of Moses; but now, beyond all else, he had come to perceive the glory of God in the face, or person, of Jesus Christ, and this had won his soul.

This special knowledge had been communicated to him at his conversion when Jesus spake to him out of heaven. In this knowledge he had made great advances by experience and by new revelations; but he had not yet learned it to the full, for he was still seeking to know it perfectly by the teaching of the divine Spirit, and we find him saying, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.

Paul knew not merely God, but God in Christ Jesus; not merely "the glory of God," but "the glory of God



THE BURIAL OF SARAH.
From the Painting by Gustave Dore.

in the face of Jesus Christ." The knowledge dealt with God, but it was Christward knowledge. He pined not for a Christless Theism, but for God in Christ. This, beloved, is the one thing which you and I should aim to know. There are parts of the divine glory which will never be seen by us in this life, speculate as we may.

Mysticism would fain pry into the unknowable; you and I may leave dreamers and their dreams, and follow the clear light which shines from the face of Jesus.

What of God it is needful and beneficial for us to know He has revealed in Christ, and whatsoever is not there, we may rest assured it is unfit and unnecessary for us to know.

Truly the revelation is by no means scant, for there is vastly more revealed in the person of Christ than we shall be likely to learn in this mortal life, and even eternity will not be too long for the discovery of all the glory of God which shines forth in the person of the word made flesh. Those who would supplement Christianity had better first add to the brilliance of the sun or the fullness of the sea. As for us, we are more than satisfied with the revelation of God in the person of our Lord Jesus, and we are persuaded of the truth of his words "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

PHILIP.

HERE is a question for Philip: "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"—a question with a pur-

pose. But there is no question with the Master, for he himself knew what he would do. And, if we enter into the spirit of the Master there will be an end of questions with us, for we shall be perfectly satisfied that He knows what He is going to do.

First, then, here is a question for Philip, as there have been many questions for us. Jesus put this question to Philip with the motive of proving him in several points. He would thus try his faith. As one has well said, "He wanted not food of Philip, but faith."

The Master enquires: "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"

What will Philip say? If Philip has strong faith, he will answer, "Great Master, there is no need to buy bread; thou art greater than Moses, and under Moses the people were fed with manna in the wilderness; thou hast but to speak the word, and bread shall be rained around the host, and they shall be filled."

If Philip had possessed great faith he might have replied, "Thou art greater than Elisha, and Elisha took a few loaves and ears of corn and fed therewith the sons of the prophets. O wonder-working Lord, thou canst do the same."

If Philip had displayed greater faith still, he might have said, "Lord, I do not know where bread is to be bought, but it is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.' Thou canst refresh these people without visible bread, thou canst satisfy their hunger and fill them to the full, and yet they need not eat a single mouthful; for it is written, 'By every word that preceedeth out of the

mouth of God shall man live.' Speak thou the word, and they will be at once refreshed."

This question, therefore, was put to prove Philip's faith. It did prove it, and proved it to be very little, for he began calculating his pennyworths—"One, two, three, four." No; I will not count two hundred, but that is what Philip did. He began counting pennies instead of looking to Omnipotence. Did you ever do the same, dear friend, when you have been tried? Did you ever get reckoning up and counting coppers, instead of looking to the eternal God and trusting in him? I fear that few of us can plead exemption from this failure, since even Moses once fell into unbelieving calculations. "And Moses said, 'The people among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?"

Remember God's answer to his anxious servant, And the Lord said unto Moses, "Is the Lord's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not." Even so shall we see the faithfulness of God, but if we are unbelieving we may have to see it in a way which will painfully bring home to us our sin in having distrusted our Lord.

And, perhaps, it came to Philip because he was not quite so forward in the school of grace as some were. Philip did not make a very wise remark when he said, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," for our Lord answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet

hast thou not known me, Philip?" He was evidently slow in learning. I do not think that Philip was the most stupid of the twelve, but I am sure that he was not the most intelligent. James and John and Peter were the first three: Andrew and Thomas followed close behind, and probably Philip was close after them. Perhaps Philip was number six; I do not know; but certainly the Savior selected him as not the lowest in the class, yet not the highest, and he said to him, "Whence shall we buy bread?"

Philip had his faculties exercised. Christ tried his arithmetic; he tried his eyesight; he tried his mind and spirit; and this prepared him to go and serve at the monster banquet which followed. A man never does a thing well till he has thought about it; and if Philip had not thought about how to feed the multitudes he would not have been a fit man to be employed in it. It prepared him also to adore his Master after the feast, for Philip would say when the feast was over, "The Master asked me how it was to be done, but I could not tell him, and now, though I have had a share in doing it, he must and shall have all the glory. He multiplied the fishes and increased the loaves. My poor faith can take no glory to itself. He did it. He did it all."

PILATE.

PILATE, throughout his term of office, had grossly misbehaved himself. He had been an unjust and unscrupulous ruler of the Jews. The Galileans and the

Samaritans both felt the terror of his arms; for he did not hesitate to massacre them at the slightest sign of revolt; and among the Jews themselves he had sent men with daggers into the midst of the crowds at the great gatherings, and so had cut off those who were obnoxious to him. Gain was his object, and pride ruled his spirit.

At the time when Jesus of Nazareth was brought before him, a complaint against him was on the way to Tiberius, the Emperor, and he feared lest he should be called to account for his oppressions, extortions, and murders. His sins at this moment were beginning to punish him; as Job would word it, "The iniquities of his heels compassed him about." One terrible portion of the penalty of sin is its power to force a man to commit yet further iniquity.

Pilate's transgressions were now howling around him like a pack of wolves; he could not face them, and he had not grace to flee to the one great refuge; but his fears drove him to flee before them, and there was no way apparently open for him but that which led him into yet deeper abominations. He knew that Jesus was without a single fault, and yet since the Jews clamored for his death he felt that he must yield to their demands, or else they would raise another accusation against himself, namely, that he was not loyal to the sovereignty of Cæsar, for he had allowed one to escape who had called himself a king.

If he had behaved justly he would not have been afraid of the chief priests and scribes. Innocence is brave: but guilt is cowardly. Pilate's old sins found him out and made him weak in the presence of the

ignoble crew, whom otherwise he would have driven from the judgment seat. He had power enough to have silenced them, but he had not sufficient decision of character to end the contention: the power was gone from his mind because he knew that his conduct would not bear investigation, and he dreaded the loss of his office, which he held only for his own ends.

See there with pity that scornful but vacillating creature wavering in the presence of men who were more wicked than himself and more determined in their purpose. The full determination of the wicked priests caused hesitating policy to quail in their presence, and Pilate was driven to do what he would gladly have avoided.

The manner and the words of Jesus had impressed Pilate. I say the manner of Jesus, for his matchless meekness must have struck the governor as being a very unusual thing in a prisoner. He had seen in captured Jews the fierce courage of fanaticism; but there was no fanaticism in Christ. He had also seen in many prisoners the meanness which will do or say anything to escape death; but he saw nothing of that about our Lord. He saw in him unusual gentleness and humility combined with majestic dignity. He beheld submission blended with innocence. This made Pilate feel how awful goodness is. He was impressed—he could not help being impressed—with this unique sufferer. Besides, our Lord had before him witnessed a good confession—you remember how we considered it the other day—and though Pilate had huffed it off with the pert question, "What is troth?" and had gone back into the judgment hall, yet there was an arrow fixed within him which he

could not shake off. It may have been mainly superstition ; but he felt an awe of one whom he half suspected to be an extraordinary personage. He felt that he himself was placed in a very extraordinary position, being asked to condemn one whom he knew to be perfectly innocent. His duty was clear enough, he could never have had a question about that ; but duty was nothing to Pilate in comparison with his own interests. He would spare the Just One if he could do so without endangering himself ; but his cowardly fears lashed him on to the shedding of innocent blood.

At the very moment when he was vacillating, when he had proffered to the Jews the choice of Barabbas, or Jesus of Nazareth ;—at that very moment, I say, when he had taken his seat upon the bench, and was waiting for their choice, there came from the hand of God a warning to him, a warning which would forever make it clear that, if he condemned Jesus, it would be done voluntarily by his own guilty hands. Jesus must die by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and yet it must be by wicked hands that he is crucified and slain ; and hence Pilate must not sin in ignorance.

A warning came to Pilate from his own wife concerning her morning's dream, a vision of mystery and terror, warning him not to touch that just person ; "for," said she, "I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."

There are times in most men's lives when, though they have been wrong, yet they have not quite been set on mischief, but have come to a pause and have deliberated as to their way; and then God in great mercy has

sent them a caution, and has set up a danger-signal bidding them stop in their mad career ere they plunged themselves fully into irretrievable ruin. Somewhere in that direction lies the subject of our present discourse. O that the Spirit of God may make it useful to many.

The next reason why his wife's appeal was ineffectual was the fact that Pilate was a coward. A man with legions at his back, and yet afraid of a Jewish mob,—afraid to let one poor prisoner go whom he knew to be innocent; afraid because he knew his conduct would not bear inspection! He was, morally, a coward! Multitudes of people go to hell because they have not the courage to fight their way to heaven. "The fearful and unbelieving have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. So saith the word of God. They are afraid of encouraging a fool's laugh, and so rush upon everlasting contempt. They could not bear to tear themselves away from old companions, and excite remarks and sarcasm among ungodly wits, and so they keep their companions and perish with them. They have not the pluck to say "No," and swim against the stream; they are such cowardly creatures that they will sooner be for ever lost than face a little scorn.

Yet, while there was cowardice in Pilate, there was presumption, too. He who was afraid of man and afraid to do right, yet dared to incur the guilt of innocent blood. Oh, the cowardice of Pilate to take water and wash his hands, as if he could wash off blood with water; and then to say, "I am innocent of his blood,"—which was a lie,—"see ye to it." By those last words he

brought the blood upon himself, for he consigned his prisoner to their tender mercies, and they could not have laid a hand upon him unless he had given them leave. Oh, the daring of Pilate thus in the sight of God to commit a murder and disclaim it. There is a strange mingling of cowardliness and courage about many men; they are afraid of a man, but not afraid of the eternal God, who can destroy them both body and soul in hell. This is why men are not saved, even when the best of means are used, because they are presumptuous, and dare defy the Lord.

It will not be a piece of mere imagination if I conceive that at the last great day, when Jesus sits upon the judgment-seat, and Pilate stands there to be judged for the deeds done in the body, that his wife will be a swift witness against him to condemn him. I can imagine that at the last great day there will be many such scenes as that, wherein those who loved us best will bring the most weighty evidence against us, if we are still in our sins. I know how it affected me as a lad when my mother, after setting before her children the way of salvation, said to us, "If you refuse Christ and perish, I cannot plead in your favor and say that you were ignorant. No, but I must say Amen to your condemnation." I could not bear that! Would my mother say "Amen" to my condemnation? And yet, Pilate's wife, what canst thou do otherwise? When all must speak the truth, what canst thou say but that thy husband was tenderly and earnestly warned hy thee and yet consigned the Savior to his enemies?

Oh, my ungodly hearers, my soul goes out after you.

"Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" Why will ye sin against the Savior? God grant you may not reject your own salvation, but may turn to Christ and find eternal redemption in him.

"Whosoever believeth in Him hath everlasting life.'

PILATE'S WIFE.

BETTER still, Pilate was accessible through the dream of his wife. Henry Melville has a very wonderful discourse upon this topic, in which he tries to show that probably if Pilate had dreamed this dream himself it would not have been so operative upon him as when his wife dreamed it.

He takes it as a supposition, which nobody can deny, that Pilate had an affectionate and tender wife, who was very dear to him. The one brief narrative which we have of her certainly looks that way; it is evident that she loved her husband dearly, and would therefore prevent his acting unjustly to Jesus. To send a warning by her was to reach Pilate's conscience through his affections. If his beloved wife was distressed it would be sure to weigh heavily with him: for he would not have her troubled. He would fain shield his tender one from every breath of wind and give her perfect comfort, and when she pleads it is his delight to yield: it is, therefore, no small trouble to him that she is suffering, suffering so much as to send a message to him, suffering

because of one who deserves her good opinion—one whom he himself knows to be without fault. If this lady was indeed the wife of Pilate's youth, tender and dearly beloved, and if she was gradually sickening before his eyes, her pale face would rise before his loving memory, and her words would have boundless power over him when she said, "I have suffered many things in a dream." O Claudia Procula, if that were thy name, well did the Lord of mercy entrust his message to thy persuasive lips, for from thee it would come with tenfold influence. Tradition declares this lady to have been a Christian, and the Greek church have placed her in their calendar as a saint. For this we have no evidence; all that we know is that she was Pilate's wife, and used her wifely influence to stay him from this crime.

How often has a tender, suffering, loving woman exercised great power over a coarse, rough man! The All-wise One knows this, and hence he often speaks to sinful men by this influential agency. He converts one in a family that she may be his missionary to the rest. Thus he speaks with something better than the tongues of men and of angels, for he uses love itself to be his orator.

Affection has more might than eloquence. That is why, my friend, God sent you for a little while that dear child who prattled to you about the Savior. She is gone to heaven now, but the music of her little hymns rings in your ear even now, and her talk about Jesus and the angels is yet with you. She has been called home; but God sent her to you for a season to charm you to himself and win you to the right way. Thus he bade you

cease from sin and turn to Christ. And that dear mother of yours, who is now before the throne, do you remember what she said to you when she was dying? You have heard me a great many times, but you never heard a sermon from me like that address from her dying couch. You can never quite forget it, or shake yourself free from its power. Beware how you trifle with it.

To Pilate his wife's message was God's ultimatum; he warned him never again, and even Jesus stood silent before him. O my friend, to you it may be that your child, your mother, or your affectionate wife may be God's last messenger, the final effort of the warning angel to bring you to a better mind. A loving relative, pleading with tears, is often the forlorn hope of mercy. An attack so skilfully planned and wisely conducted may be regarded as the last assault of love upon a stubborn spirit, and after this it will be left to its own devices.

The selection of the wife was no doubt made by infinite wisdom and tenderness, that if possible, Pilate might be arrested in his career of crime and strengthened to the performance of an act of justice by which he would have avoided the most terrible of crimes.

So, then, we may safely conclude that the Lord has his missionaries where the city missionary cannot enter; he sends the little children to sing and pray where the preacher is never heard; he moves the godly woman to proclaim the gospel by her lip and life where the Bible is not read. He sends a sweet girl to grow up and win a brother or a father where no other voice would be allowed to tell of Jesus and his love.

We thank God it is so; it gives hope for the house-

holds of this godless city,—it gives us hope even for those for whom the Sabbath-bell rings out in vain. They will hear, they must hear these home preachers, these messengers who tug at their hearts.

Ay, and let me add that where God does not employ a dream, nor use a wife, yet he can get at men's conscience by no visible means but by thoughts which come unbidden and abide upon the soul. Truths long buried suddenly rise up, and when the man is in the very act of sin he is stopped in the way, as Balaam was when the angel met him.

How often it has happened that conscience has met a guilty man even in the moment when he meant to enjoy the pleasure bought with wrong, even as Elijah met Ahab at the gate of Naboth's vineyard! How the king starts back as he beholds the prophet: he would sooner have seen the very fiend than Elijah. Angrily he cries, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?"

Though, indeed, Elijah was his best friend, had he known it. Often does conscience pounce upon a man when the sweet morsel of sin has just been rolled under his tongue, and he is sitting down to enjoy it: the visitation of conscience turns the stolen honey into bitterness, and the forbidden joy into anguish.

Conscience often lies like a lion in a thicket, and when the sinner comes along the broad road it leaps upon him, and for a while he is sorely put to it.

The bad man is comparable to leviathan, of which we read that his scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal; so that the sword of him that layeth

at him cannot hold, the spear, the dart, nor the javelin; and yet the Lord hath a way of coming at him and of sore wounding him. Let us, therefore, both hope and pray for the very worst of men.

SARAH.

ABRAHAM'S faith was such that it led him to obedience. He was called to go out, and he went, not knowing whither he went. His faith through grace led him to perseverance; for once in God's way he did not leave it, but still abode a sojourner with God. His faith led him to expectancy; he looked for the promised seed, and not only for an Isaac but for the Messiah. So clear was the vision of his expectancy that before his eyes Christ was set forth, visibly. Did not the Savior, who knew all things, say, "Abraham saw my day; he saw it, and was glad?"

The like faith also dwelt in the breast of Sarah; and, as we are told in the text to look to Sarah as well as Abraham, let us not fail to do so. The faith of Sarah was not little when she left home with her husband; forsaking her kith and kin from love to God, and to him whom she called "lord."

She acted as if she had said to the great patriarch, "Where thou goest I will go; where thou dwellest I will dwell, for thy God is my God."

Nor did the trial of her faith end with the moving;

she had to take up with tent life and all its inconveniences. It is the woman that knows the discomfort of domestic life under such circumstances.

We never heard that she complained for a moment, though the cold of winter and the heat of summer are neither of them warded off by a text.

How readily she entertained her husband's guests. Though they might drop in at most unseasonable hours, or call her to bake bread in the heat of the day, she was glad to welcome strangers, for, like her husband, she was given to hospitality.

I saw you smile, dear friends, when I mentioned domestic matters; but to me it is the solemnity of faith that men and woman can not only pray and sing, but can put up with household discomforts out of obedience to God.

Certain people look upon faith as a fine, airy, sentimental thing with which to roam among the stars, anticipate millenniums, and enjoy yourself in lofty contemplation. I believe far more in a faith which, whether it eats or drinks, does all to the glory of God; faith which, like Sarah, dwells in the tent and works there; faith which is cheerful over a scanty meal and drives away the fear of want; faith which can come down in life from the mansion to the cottage, if providence so decrees.

From Abraham's comfortable home at Ur to his gipsy wanderings in Palestine the change must have been great, but Abraham may not have felt it one-half as much as Sarah, for men can rough it and live out of doors, but the housewife knows all about it, and great was her faith

that she never raised a question about the propriety of her husband's course of life: and though she laughed when she was told that she should bear a son, yet remember that in the eleventh of Hebrews it is written: "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength." She was the mother of Isaac, not in the power of the flesh, but through the energy of faith, therefore look at her as the text bids you.

SAUL.

And now another character, and another text. In the first book of Samuel, the 15th chapter and 24th verse: And Saul said unto Samuel, "I have sinned!"

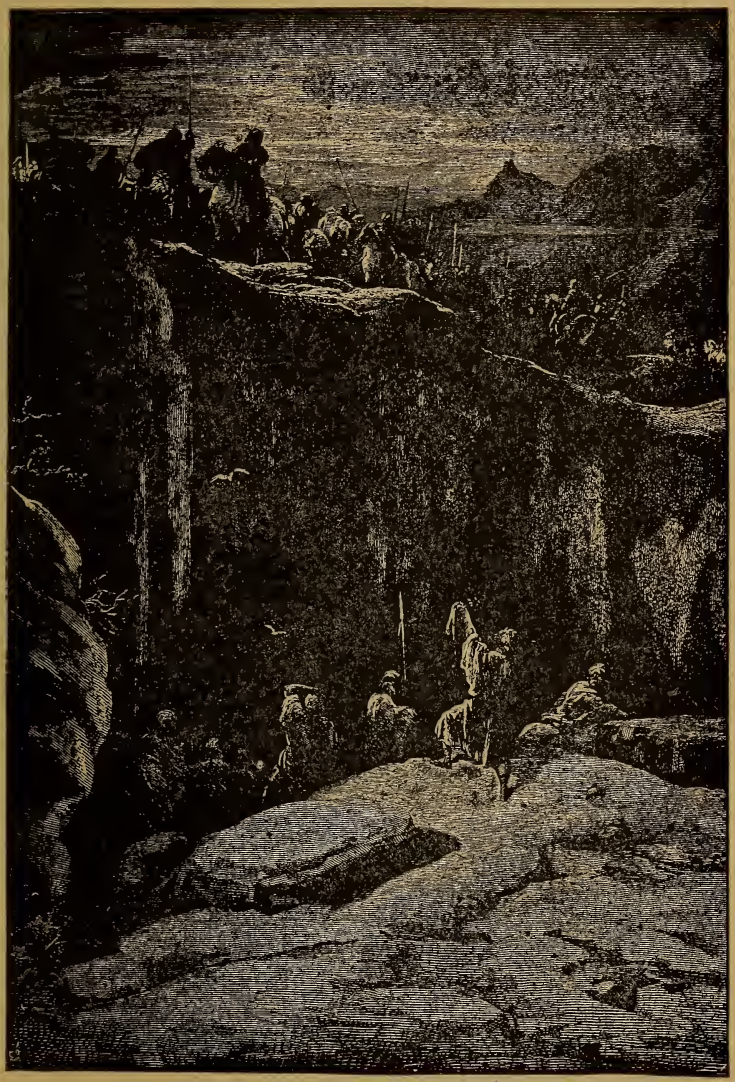
Here is the insincere man—the man who is not like Balaam, to a certain extent sincere in two things; but the man who is just the opposite—who has no prominent point in his character at all, but is moulded everlastingly by the circumstances that are passing over his head.

Such a man was Saul.

Samuel reproved him, and he said, "I have sinned."

But he did not mean what he said: for if you read the whole verse you will find him saying, "I have sinnedt for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people!" which was a lying excuse.

Saul never feared anybody; he was always ready enough to do his own will—he was the despot.



DAVID, SPARING SAUL.
From the Painting by Gustave Dore.

And just before he had pleaded another excuse, that he had saved the bullocks and lambs to offer to Jehovah, and therefore both excuses could not have been true.

You remember, my friends, that the most prominent feature in the character of Saul was his insincerity. One day he fetched David from his bed, as he thought, to put him to death in the house. Another time he declares, "God forbid that I should do aught against thee, my son David."

One day, because David saved his life, he said, "Thou art more righteous than I; I will do so no more."

The day before he had gone out to fight against his own son-in-law, in order to slay him.

Sometimes Saul was among the prophets, and then afterwards among the witches; sometimes in one place, and then in another, and insincere in everything.

How many such we have in every Christian assembly; men who are very easily moulded! Say what you please to them, they always agree with you. They have affectionate dispositions, very likely a tender conscience; but then the conscience is so remarkably tender, that when touched it seems to give, and you are afraid to probe deeper,—it heals as soon as it is wounded. I think I used the very singular comparison once before, which I must use again: there are some men who seem to have india-rubber hearts. If you do but touch them, there is an impression made at once; but then it is of no use, it soon restores itself to its original character. You may press them whatever way you wish, they are so elastic you can always effect your purpose; but then they are not

fixed in their character, and soon return to be what they were before.

O sirs, too many of you have done the same; you have bowed your heads in church, and said, "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways;" and you did not mean what you said. You have come to your minister; you have said, "I repent of my sins;" you did not then feel you were a sinner; you only said it to please him.

And now you attend the house of God; no one more impressible than you; the tear will run down your cheek in a moment, but yet, notwithstanding all that, the tear is dried as quickly as it is brought forth, and you remain to all intents and purposes the same as you were before. To say, "I have sinned," in an unmeaning manner, is worse than worthless, for it is a mockery of God thus to confess with insincerity of heart.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

IN SIN.

THERE are different stages in the sinner's history, and they are worth marking in the prodigal's experience. There is, first, the stage in which the young man sought independence of his father.

The younger son said, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me."

We know something of that state of mind; and, alas! it is a very common one. As yet there is no open

profligacy, no distinct rebellion against God. Religious services are attended, the father's God is held in reverence; but in his heart the young man desires a supposed liberty, he wishes to cast off all restraint. Companions hint that he is too much tied to his mother's apron strings. He himself feels that there may be some strange delights which he has never enjoyed; and the curiosity of Mother Eve to taste the fruit of that tree which was good for food, and pleasant to the eye, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, comes into the young man's mind, and he wishes to put forth his hand, and take the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, that he may eat thereof.

He never intends to spend his substance in riotous living, but he would like to have the opportunity of spending it as he likes. He does not mean to be a profligate; still, he would like to have the honor of choosing what is right on his own account. At any rate, he is a man now; he feels his blushing honors full npon him, and he wants now to exercise his own freedom of will, and to feel that he himself is really his own master.

"Who, indeed," he asks, "is lord over me?" Perhaps there are some to whom I am speaking who are just in such a state as that; if so, may the grace of God arrest you before you go any further away from Him! May you feel that, to be out of gear with God, to wish to be separated from Him, and to have other interests than those of Him who made you, must be dangerous, and probably will be fatal!

Therefore now, even now, may you come to yourself at this earliest stage of your history, and also come to

love and rejoice in God as the prodigal returned to his father!

Very soon, however, this young man in the parable entered upon quite another stage.

He had received his portion of goods; all that he would have had at his father's death he had turned into ready money, and there it is. It is his own, and he may do what he pleases with it. Having already indulged his independent feeling towards his father, and his wish to have a separate establishment altogether from him, he knew that he would be freer to carry out his plans if he was right away. Anywhere near his father there is a check upon him; he feels that the influence of his home somewhat clips his wings.

If he could get into a far country, there he should have the opportunity to develop; and all that evolution could do for him he would have the opportunity of enjoying, so he gathers all together and goes into the far country.

Sin is a dangerous joy, beloved all the more because of the danger; for, where there is a fearful risk, there is often an intense pleasure to a daring heart; and you, perhaps, are one of that venturous band, spending your days in folly and your nights in riotousness.

Ere long there comes a third stage to the sinner as well as to the prodigal, that is when he has "spent all." Oh, there be some who spend all their character, spend all their health and strength, spend all their hope, spend all their uprightness, spend everything that was worth having! They have spent all.

It is a dreadful state to be in, for there comes at the

back of it a terrible hunger. There is a weary labor to get something that may stay the spirit, a descending to the degradation of feeding swine, a willingness to eat of the husks that swine do eat, yet an inability to do so.

Many have felt this craving that cannot be satisfied. That is the point the prodigal had reached "when he came to himself."

Then, first, a sinner is beside himself.

While he is living in his sin, he is out of his mind, he is beside himself. I am sure that it is so. There is nothing more like to madness than sin; and it is a good point among those who study deep problems how far insanity and the tendency to sin go side by side, and whereabouts it is that great sin and entire loss of responsibility may touch each other.

Every sinner is morally and responsibly insane.

He is insane, first, because his judgment is altogether out of order. He makes fatal mistakes about all-important matters. He reckons a short time of this mortal life to be worth all his thoughts, and he puts eternity into the background. He considers it possible for a creature to be at enmity against the Creator, or indifferent to Him, and yet to be happy. He fancies that he knows better what is right for him than the law of God declares. He dreams that the everlasting gospel, which cost God the life of His own Son, is scarcely worthy of his attention at all, and he passes it by with contempt. His judgment is out of order.

Further, his actions are those of a madman. This prodigal son, first of all, has interests apart from his father. He must have been mad to have conceived such

an idea as that. For me to have interests apart from Him who made me, and keeps me alive,—for me, the creature of an hour, to fancy that I can have a will in opposition to the will of God, and that I can so live and prosper,—why, I must be a fool! Yet, this sinner does not see that it is so, and the reason is that he is beside himself.

Then, next, that young man went away from his home, though it was the best home in all the world. We can judge that from the exceeding tenderness and generosity of the father at the head of it, and from the wonderful way in which all the servants had such entire sympathy with their master.

It was a happy home, well stored with all that the son could need; yet he quits it to go he knows not whither, among strangers who did not care a straw for him, and who, when they had drained his purse, would not even give him a penny with which to buy bread to save him from starving.

You can see that this young man is out of his mind, because, when he gets into the far country, he begins spending his money riotously. He does not lay it out judiciously, he spends his money for that which is not bread, and his labor for that which satisfieth not; and that is just what the sinner does. The most reasonable thing in the world is to spend life for its own true design, and not to fling it away as though it were a pebble on the sea-shore.

Further, the prodigal was a fool, he was mad, for he spent all. He did not even stop half way on the road to penury, but he went on till he had spent all. There

is no limit to those who have started in a course of sin. He that stays back from it, by God's grace may keep back from it; but it is with sin as it is with the intoxicating cup.

One said to me the other day, "I can drink much, or I can drink none; but I have not the power to drink a little, for if I begin I cannot stop myself, and may go to any length."

So it is with sin, God's grace can keep you abstaining from sin; but, if you begin sinning, oh, how one sin draws on another! One sin is the decoy or magnet for another sin, and draws it on; and one cannot tell, when he begins to descend this slippery slide, how quickly and how far he may go. Thus the prodigal spent all in utter recklessness; and, oh, the recklessness of some sinners whom I know!

Then it was, dear friends, when the prodigal had spent all, that he still further proved his madness. That would have been the time to go home to his father, but, apparently, that thought did not occur to him. "He went and joined himself to a citizen of that country," still overpowered by the fascination that kept him away from the one place where he might have been happy; and that is one of the worst proofs of the madness of some of you who frequent these courts, that, though you know about the great God and His infinite mercy, and know something of how much you need Him and His grace, yet you still try to get what you want somewhere else, and do not go back to Him.

I shall not have time to say much more upon this point, but I must remind you, that, like sinners, the

prodigal had the ways of a madman. I have had, at times, to deal with those whose reason has failed them, and I have noticed that many of them have been perfectly sane, and even wise, and clever, on all points except one. So is it with the sinner.

A madman will often conceal his madness from those round about him; so will a sinner hide his sin. You may talk with this man about morals, and you may watch him very closely; yet you may be a long time before you can find him out, and be able to say to him, "One thing thou lackest." Perhaps, on a sudden, you touch that weak point, and there he stands fully developed before you, far gone in his insanity. He is right enough elsewhere, but with regard to his soul his reason is gone. Mad people do not know that they have been mad till they are cured; they think that they alone are wise, and all the rest are fools. We, with tears pray God to deliver them from their delusions, and to bring them to sit at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in their right minds.

Sometimes the sinner will be seen and known to be mad because he turns on his best friends, as madmen do. They whom they otherwise would have loved the most they reckon to be their worst enemies. So God, who is man's best Friend, is most despised, and Christ, who is the Friend of sinners, is rejected, and the most earnest Christians are often the most avoided or persecuted by sinners.

I will not dwell longer on this sad fact, because I want to speak on the next and brighter part of my theme.

RECLAIMED.

It is a blessed thing when the sinner comes to him-

self: "When he comes to himself." This is the first mark of grace working in the sinner, as it was the first sign of hope for the prodigal.

Sometimes, this change occurs suddenly. I was greatly charmed, this week, by meeting with one to whom this happened. It was an old-fashioned sort of conversion, with which I was delighted.

There came into this building, some three months ago, a man who had not for a long time gone to any place of worship. He despised such things; he could swear, and drink, and do worse things still, he was careless, godless; but he had a mother who often prayed for him, and he had a brother whose prayer has never ceased for him. He did not come here to worship, he came just to see the preacher whom his brother had been hearing for so many years; but, coming in, somehow he was no sooner in the place than he felt that he was unfit to be here, so he went up into the top gallery, as far back as he could, and when some friend beckoned him to take a seat, he felt that he could not do so, he must just lean against the wall at the back.

Some one else invited him to sit down, but he could not; but when the preacher announced his text,—"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift so much as his eyes up to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to a sinner;'"—and said something like this, "You that stand farthest off in the Tabernacle, and dare not sit down because you feel guilt to be so great, you are the man to whom God has sent me this morning, and he bids you come to Christ and find mercy," a miracle of love was wrought.

Then, "he came to himself," as he will tell us soon at the church-meeting, when he comes forward to confess his faith. I rejoiced greatly when I heard of it, for in his case there is a change that everybody who knows him can see. "He came to himself."

On the other hand, sometimes this change is very gradual. I need not dwell upon that, but there are many who have their eyes opened by degrees. Some conversions are sudden, some gradual; but in every case, if it be the work of the Holy Spirit, and the man comes to himself, it is well.

I come now to the last instance, which I shall mention, it is the case of the prodigal. In Luke xv. 18, we find, the prodigal says: "Father, I have sinned."

Oh, here is a blessed confession! Here is that which proves a man to be a regenerate character—"Father, I have sinned." Let me picture the scene! There is the prodigal; he has run away from a good home and a kind father, and he has spent all his money with harlots, and now he has none left. He goes to his old companions, and asks them for relief. They laugh him to scorn.

"Oh," says he, "you have drunk my wine many a day; I have always stood paymaster to you in all our revelries; will you not help me?"

"Get you gone," they say; and he is turned out of doors.

He goes to all his friends with whom he had associated, but no man gives him anything. At last a certain citizen of the country said, "You want something to do, do you? Well, go and feed my swine."

The poor prodigal, the son of a rich land-owner, who

had a great fortune of his own, has to go out to feed swine; and he a Jew too!—the worst employment (to his mind) to which he could be put. See him there, in squallid rags, feeding swine; and what are his wages? Why, so little that he "would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine eat, but no man gave to him."

Suddenly a thought strikes his mind.

"How is it," says he, "that in my father's house there is bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.'"

Off he goes. He begs his way from town to town. And at last he comes to the hill outside the village, and sees his father's house down below. He says, "What am I to do? I cannot go back. I am afraid to go forward."

Well, the father sees him, runs up to him, and whilst he is thinking of running away, his father's arms are round his neck, and he falls to kissing him, and then the son begins: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," and he was going to say the rest, but his father puts his hand on his mouth.

"No more of that," says he; "I forgive you all; you shall not say anything about being a hired servant—I will have none of that. Come along, poor prodigal. Ho!" says he to the servants, "bring hither the best robe, and put it on him, and put shoes on his poor, bleeding feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; and let us

eat and be merry: For this, my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

Oh, what a precious reception for one of the chief of sinners! Oh, what a God of mercy he is. Now, prodigal, you do the same. Has God put it into your heart? There are many who have been running away a long time now. Does God say "return?" Oh, I bid you return, then, for as surely as ever thou dost return He will take thee in. There never was a poor sinner yet who came to Christ, whom Christ turned away. If He turns you away, you will be the first. Oh, if you could but try Him! Come to your Father's house, and as surely as He is God He will keep His word—"Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

Oh, if I might hear that some had come to Christ this morning, I would indeed bless God!

PRODIGAL'S RETURN

"When he was yet a great way off his father saw him." It is true, He has always seen him. God sees the sinner in every state and in every position. Aye, and sees him with an eye of love, too—such a chosen sinner as is described in this text—not with complacency, but still with affection. God looks upon his wandering chosen ones.

I say that father saw his son when he spent his living with harlots, saw him with deep sorrow, when he fain would have filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat; but now, if there can be such a thing as for divine conscience to become more exact, the father sees him with an eye full of a more tender love, a greater care.

"His father saw *him*." Oh! what a sight it was for a father to see! His son, it is true, but his reprobate son, who had dishonored his father's name; brought down the name of an honorable house to be mentioned among the dregs and scum of the earth. There he is! What a sight for a *father's* eye! He is filthy, as though he had been rolling in the mire; and his gay clothing had long ago lost its fine colors, and hangs about him in wretched rags. The father does not turn away and try to forget him, he fixes his full gaze upon him.

Sinner, thou knowest that God sees thee this morning; sitting in this house, thou art observed of the God of heaven. There is not a desire in thy heart unread of Him, nor a tear in thine eye which He does not observe. I tell thee He has seen thy midnight sins, He has heard thy cursings and thy blasphemies, and yet He has loved thee notwithstanding all that thou hast done. Is there not some comfort here?

Why could not *he* see his father? Was it the effect of the tears in his eyes that he could not see? or was it that his father was of quicker sight than he?

Sinner, thou canst not see God, for thou art unbelieving, and carnal, and blind, but He can see thee; thy tears of penitence block up thy sight, but thy Father is quick of eye, and He beholds thee and loves thee now; in every glance there is love. "His father saw him."

Observe, this was a loving observation, for it is written, "*His father* saw him." He did not see him as a mere casual observer; he did not note him as a man might note his friend's child with some pity and benevolence, but he marked him as a father alone can do.

The next thought to be well considered is divine compassion.

"When he saw him he had compassion on him."

Does not the word *com-passion* mean suffering-with or fellow-suffering? What is compassion, then, but putting yourself into the place of the sufferer and feeling his grief? If I may so say, the father put himself into the son's rags, and then felt as much pity for him as that poor, ragged prodigal could have felt for himself.

I saw, not many hours ago, a young man who brought to my mind the prodigal in this case: his face marked with innumerable lines of sin and wretchedness, his body lean and emaciated, his clothes close-buttoned, his whole appearance the very mirror of woe. He knocked at my door. I knew his case; I cannot hurt him by telling it. He had disgraced his family, not once or twice, but many times. At last he drew out what money he had in the business of a respectable family, came up to London with four hundred pounds, and in about five weeks spent it all; and, without a single farthing to help himself, he often wants for bread, and I fear he has often crept at night into the parks to sleep, and thus has brought aches and pains into his bones which will stay by him till he dies. He wanders the streets by day, a vagabond and a reprobate. I have written to his friends, the case has been put before them; they will not own him; and, considering his shameful conduct, I do not wonder at it. He has no father and no mother left. If he were helped beyond mere food and lodging, as far as we can judge, it would be money thrown away; if he were helped, he seems so desperately set on wickedness, that he would do the same

again. Yet, as I think, I can but desire to see him have one more trial at the least, and he would have it, I doubt not, if *his father* yet lived ; but others feel, the fountains of their love are stayed.

As I think of him, I cannot but feel that if he were a son of mine, and I saw him in such a case come to my door, whatever the crime was that he had committed, I must fall upon his neck and kiss him ; the hugest sin could not put out for ever the sparks of paternal love. I might condemn the sin in terms the sharpest and most severe; I might regret that he had ever been born, and cry with David, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom ! would to God I had died for thee !" but I could not shut him out of my house, nor refuse to call him my child. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Be of good courage, for the text says, "He had compassion on him."

Notice and observe carefully the swiftness of this divine love: "He ran."

Probably he was looking out for his son, when one morning he just caught a glimpse of a poor, sorry figure in the distance. If he had been anything but the father he would not have known it to be his son, he was so altered ; but he looked and looked again, till at last he said, "It is he ! oh ! what marks of famine are upon him, and of suffering, too !" And down came the old gentleman.

"Where is master going ? I have not seen him run at that rate for many a day," cried a servant.

He does not take the road, for that is a little round about ; but there is a gap through the hedge, and he is

jumping over it; the straightest way he can find he goes; and before the son has had time to notice who it is, he is on him, and has his arms about him, falling upon his neck and kissing him.

I recollect a young prodigal who was received in the same way, Here he stands, it is I, myself. I sat in a little chapel, little dreaming that *my Father* saw me; certainly I was a great way off. I felt something of my need of Christ, but I did not know what I must do to be saved; though taught the letter of the Word, I was spiritually ignorant of the plan of salvation; though taught it from my youth up, I knew it not. If ever there was a soul that knew itself to be far off from God, I was that soul; and yet in a moment, in one single moment, no sooner had I heard the words, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," than I felt my perfect reconciliation with God, I knew my sins to be forgiven. There was no time for getting out of my heavenly Father's way; and in my case he ran aud fell upon my neck to kiss me.

After noticing thus, observation, compassion, and swiftness, do uot forget the nearness: "He fell upon his neck and kissed him."

This I can understand from experience, but it is too wonderful for me to explain, "he fell upon his neck." If he had stood at a distance and said. "John, I should be very glad to kiss you, but you are too filthy; I do not know what may be under those filthy rags; I do not feel inclined to fall upon your neck just yet; you are too far gone for me. I love you, but there is a limit to the display of love. When I have got you into a proper state,

then I may manifest my affection to you, but I cannot just now, while you are so very foul."

Oh! no! but before he is washed he falls on his neck —there is the wonder of it. I can understand how God manifests his love to a soul that is washed in Jesus' blood and knows it; but how he could fall upon the neck of a foul, filthy sinner as such? There it is—not as sanctified, not as having anything good in himself, but as nothing but a filthy, foul, desperate rebel, God falls upon his neck and kisses him.

It was said of that eminent saint and martyr, Bishop Hooper, that on one occasion a man in deep distress was allowed to go into his prison to tell his tale of conscience; but Bishop Hooper looked so sternly upon him, and addressed him so sternly at first, that the poor soul ran away, and could not get comfort until he had sought out another minister of a gentler aspect.

There is yet another thought to be brought out of the metaphor of kissing; we are not to pass that over without dipping our cup in the honey. In kissing his son the father recognizes relationship. He said, with emphasis, "Thou art my son," and the prodigal was

> "To his Father's bosom pressed,
> Once for all a child confessed."

Again, that kiss was the seal ot forgiveness. He would not have kissed him if he had been angry with him; he forgave him, forgave him all. There was, moreover, something more than forgiveness, there was acceptance—"I receive you back into my heart, as though you were worthy of all that I give to your elder brother, and therefore I kiss you."

Surely, also, this was a kiss of delight—as if he took pleasure in him, delighting in him, feasting his eyes with the sight of him, and feeling more happy to see him than to see all his fields, and the fatted calves, and all the treasures that he possessed. His delight was in seeing this poor, restored child. Surely this is all summed up in a kiss.

We will just say these words and have done. In summing up one may notice that this sinner, though he was a great way off, was not received to full pardon and to adoption and acceptance by a gradual process, but he was received at once. He was not allowed to enter into the out-house first, and to sleep in a barn at night, and then afterwards allowed to come sometimes and have his meals with the servants in the kitchen, and afterwards allowed to sit at the bottom of the table and by degrees brought near.

No; but the father fell on his neck and kissed him the first moment; he gets as near to God the first moment as he ever will. Oh! what a wonder is this? Fresh from his pigstye was he not, yet in a father's bosom; fresh from the swine with their gruntings in his ears, and now he hears a father's loving words; a few days ago he was putting husks to his mouth, and now it is a father's lips that are on his lips. What a change, and all at once. I say there is no gradual process in this, but the thing is done at once, in a moment he comes to his father, his father comes to him, and he is in his father's arms.

Observe again, as there was not a gradual reception, there was not a partial reception. He was not forgiven

on conditions; he was not received to his father's heart if he would do so-and-so. No; there were no "ifs" and no "buts;" he was kissed, and clothed, and feasted, without a single condition of any kind whateuer. No questions asked—his father had cast his offences behind his back in a moment, and he was received without even a censure or a rebuke. It was not a partial reception. He was not received to some things and refused others. He was not, for instance, allowed to call himself a child, but to think himself an inferior. No; he wears the best robe; he has the ring on his finger; he has the shoes on his feet; and he joins in eating the fatted calf; and so the sinner is not received to a second-class place, but he is taken to the full position of a child of God. It is not a gradual nor yet a partial reception.

And once more, it is not a temporary reception. His father did not kiss him and then turn him out at the back door. He did not receive him for a time, and then afterwards say to him, "Go thy way; I have had pity upon thee; thou hast now a new start, go into the far country and mend thy ways."

No; but the father would say to him what he had already said to the elder brother, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

In the parable, the son could not have the goods restored, for he had spent his part; but in the truth itself and matter of fact, God does make the man who comes in at the eleventh hour equal with the one who comes in at the first hour of the day; He gives every man the penny; and he gives to the child who has been the most wandering the same privileges, and ultimately the same

heritage, which he gives to his own who have been these many years with him, and have not transgressed his commandments. That is a remarkable passage in one of the prophets where he says, "Ekron as a Jebusite;" meaning that the Philistine, when converted, should be treated just the same as the original inhabitants of Jerusalem; that the branches of the olive which were grafted in, have the same privileges as the original branches.

When God takes men from being heirs of wrath, and makes them heirs of grace, they have just as much privilege at the first as though they had been heirs of grace twenty years, because in God's sight they always were heirs of grace, and from all eternity he viewed His most wandering sons.

O, I would to God that He would in His infinite mercy bring some of His own dear children home this day, and He shall have the praise, world without end.

I have now to speak of the joy of the sinner. The son was glad. He did not express it in words, as far as I can see in the parable, but he felt it none the less—but all the more. Sometimes silence is discreet, and it was so in this case; at other times it is absolutely forced upon you by inability to utter the emotion, and this also was true of the prodigal.

The son's heart was too full for utterance in words, but he had speaking eyes, and a speaking countenance as he looked on that dear father. As he put on the robe, the ring, and the shoes, he must have been too astonished to speak. He wept in showers that day, but the tears were not salt with grief; they were sweet tears, glittering like the dew of the morning.

What would make the son glad, think you? Why, the father's love, the father's forgiveness, and restoration to his old place in his father's heart. That was the point. But then each gift would serve as a token of that love and make the joy overflow.

There was the robe put on,—the dress of a son, and of a son well beloved and accepted. Have you noticed how the robe answered to his confession? The sentences match each other thus: "Father, I have sinned;" —"Bring forth the best robe and put it on him."

Cover all his sins with Christ's righteousness; put away his sin by imputing to him the righteousness of the Lord Jesus.

The robe also met his condition; he was in rags, therefore, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him," and you shall see no more of his rags. It was fit that he should be thus arrayed, in token of his restoration. He who is re-endowed with the privileges of a son should not be dressed in sordid clothes, but wear raiment suitable to his station.

Moreover, as a festival was about to begin he ought to wear a festive garment. It would not be seemly for him to feast and be merry in his rags. Put the best robe on him that he may be ready to take his place at the banquet.

So, when the penitent comes to God he is not only covered, as to the past, by the righteousness of Christ, but he is prepared for the future blessedness which is reserved for the pardoned ones, yea, he is fitted to begin the rejoicing at once.

Then came the ring, a luxury rather than a necessary,

except that now he was a son it was well that he should be restored to all the honors of his relationship. The signet ring in the East in former times conferred great privileges: in those days men did not sign their names, but stamped with their signet upon wax, so that the ring gave a man power over property, and made him a sort of other self to the man whose ring he wore. The father gives the son a ring, and how complete an answer was that gift to another clause of his confession.

Let me read the two sentences together, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." "Put a ring on his hand."

The gift precisely meets the confession. It also tallied with his changed condition. The ring indicated the penitent's liberty from sin, and his enjoyment of the full privileges of his Father's house

O, beloved, the Lord will make you glad if you come to Him, by putting the seal of the Holy Spirit's indwelling upon you, which is both the earnest of the inheritance and the best adornment of the hand of your practical character. This ring upon your finger will declare your marriage union to Christ, set forth the eternal love which the Father has fixed npon you, and to the abiding pledge of the perfect work of the Holy Ghost.

Then they put shoes on his feet. I suppose he had worn out his own. In the East servants do not usually wear shoes at home, and especially in the best rooms of the house. The master and his son wear the sandals, but not the servants, so that this order was an answer to the last part of the penitent's prayer, "Make me as one

of thy servants." "No," says the father, "put shoes on his feet." In the forgiven sinner the awe which puts off its shoes is to be overmatched by the familiarity which wears the shoes which infinite love provides. The forgiven one is no longer to tremble at Sinai, but he is to come unto Mount Zion, and to have familiar intercourse with God. Thus also the restored one was shod for filial service—he could run upon his father's errands, or work in his father's fields, He had now in every way all that he could want—the robe that covered him, the ring that adorned him, and the shoe that prepared him for travel or labor.

Now, ye awakened and anxious ones who are longing to draw nigh to God, I would that this description of the joy of the prodigal would influence you to come at once.

Come, ye naked, and He will say, "Bring forth the best robe."

Come, ye that see your natural deformity through sin, and He will adorn you with a ring of beauty.

Come. ye who feel as if you could not come, for ye have bleeding, weary feet, and He will shoe you with the silver sandals of His grace. Amen.

ZACCHÆUS.

THERE are certain persons in the world who are lost in a more apparent sense than others are—I mean that

they are lost to society, to respect, and, perhaps, to decency.

That was the case with Zacchæus. I do not know what may have been his parentage. Possibly, he was born of most reputable folk, but he showed a vicious mind, and he turned aside from the good old paths; he loved low company and despised his father's seriousness. There was great grief in that household on his account. Zaccheus was lost to his parents!

They had hoped he would have been a credit to their name, but instead thereof he was a dishonor; they trusted that he would be the staff of their old age, but now he was a scourge to them. They scarcely dared to whisper his name in any company, for he had joined with the men of Belial, and mingled with the lewdest sort in the city; and by-and-by, as men go from bad to worse, Zacchæus had taken up with the low and infamous trade of a tax-gatherer, and he so pushed his way in it by his sharpness and hardness of heart, that he became chief of the odious band of the extortionate oppressors of the poor people.

The Pharisees, of course, never looked at him; they passed him by as though he were a dog, while the ordinary people of Jericho, when he was out of hearing, cursed him. Had he not exacted upon one—had he not oppressed another?

His very name had a ban set upon it. He was lost to society. But the Son of man sought him and saved him, lost as he was. Society, to this day, has its rules, by the breach of which persons become outcasts. These

rules are, some of them, commendable, but others are arbitrary, one-sided, cruel and hypocritical.

We have sometimes heard men of the world ridicule what they are pleased to call the cant of the Church, but we take leave to say that there is no cant so desperately canting as the cant of the world.

There occurred, not long ago, an instance of the world's relentless cruelty to those whom it is fashionable to brand with dishonor. A person who had, perhaps, fallen into sin in her earlier days, was restored to a respectable position; she was received in society among the noblest, but on a sudden, dastardly lips revealed a secret, and a sin committed far back was raked up against her; henceforth the world put away the woman, never asking her if she had repented, or taking her after-conduct into consideration.

The world is so pure, and chaste, and immaculate, that it shut out the erring one as if she had been a leper. Though itself reeking with foulest abominations, society feigns a virtuousness pure as the lily and chaste as the snow. The world is cold, hard, cruel, towards a certain class of offenders. It receives into its embraces men who are, every inch of them, unclean; but a betrayed, deceived, broken-hearted woman, the world shakes off as if she were a viper. This is the society which boasts its gallantry! This is the just, fair-dealing world!

It caresses its noble rakes, but casts off the most penitent among the betrayed. Ah, hypocritical, canting world! Ah, hollow, lying world, to pretend to a virtue which thou dost not know! Rail not at the inconsistencies of religious men while thine own are so glaring!

Cruel tyrant, learn mercy and do justice, ere thou becomest a judge of the servants of the Lord.

Now, the Son of man is come to seek and to save those whom the world puts outside its camp. The world says "No;" "Shame on her;" "We will not speak to her;" but Christ Jesus says, "I have come to pardon her, and to restore her, and she shall love me much, because much has been forgiven her!"

There are other cases in which men, by their crimes, most justly place themselves outside the pale of society; and for the preservation of order they are separated from the company of honest men. Now, even these should have a door of hope left to them, and a way of return. The cry too often is, "Down with him; down with him; he has sinned against his fellow-men; put him aside, what care we what becomes of him."

But the Son of man, who is infinitely pure and holy, who has a genuine horror of sin, so that he really hates it and loathes it, yet does not loathe sinners, but has come to seek and to save them. The sweep of divine compassion is not limited by the customs of mankind; the boundaries of Jesus' love are not to be fixed by Pharisaical self-righteousness.

"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

AMERICA.

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrim's pride,
From every mountain side
Let freedom ring.

My native country, thee,
Land of the noble free,
Thy name I love;
I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills,
My heart with rapture thrills
Like that above.

Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees
Sweet freedom's song;
Let mortal tongues awake,
Let all that breathe partake,
Let rocks their silence break,
The sound prolong.

Our father's God to thee,
Author of liberty,
To thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright,
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might,
Great God, our King.

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